

**A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC STUDY OF
DANG-KI HEALING (TAIWANESE SHAMANISM):
CROSS-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL COUNSELORS**

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ABSTRACT
A PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC STUDY OF
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Dang-ki healing (Taiwanese shamanism) and other forms of folk healing have regained their popularity in the midst of drastic social changes of modernization in Taiwan. Not only in the rural areas but also in the cities *dang-ki* healing plays an important role for many Taiwanese despite recent and steady increases in the numbers of medical doctors and modern counselors. This situation raises a series of research questions to be answered in this study. They are: What is *dang-ki* healing? What are the major factors enabling its effectiveness? Is it a model of folk psychotherapy? How does it compare with modern psychotherapy? What can pastoral counselors learn from it?

This thesis explores and analyzes *dang-ki* healing from the perspective of psychotherapy. Its methodology relies on library research and field study. In order to provide a comprehensive and systematic study, the research proceeds along three related lines. Since a study of

dang-ki healing must begin by putting it in a Taiwanese context, cultural, religious, historical, and mental health backgrounds of *dang-ki* healing are first reviewed in Part One. Part Two presents a general description of the content of *dang-ki* healing. It discusses how a *dang-ki* is chosen and trained, the *dang-ki*'s clients and the methods of *dang-ki* treatment. This section is highlighted by case studies in order to provide analysis and evaluations of the *dang-ki*'s psychotherapeutic functions. Finally, in Part Three are listed the specific and applicable implications of *dang-ki* healing for the pastoral counselor. The implications urge counselors, especially those in a more pluralistic society, to look carefully from a cross-cultural perspective at the clinical realities in their own culture and sub-cultures. This brings to Taiwanese pastoral counselors a great challenging task of developing their indigenous counseling approach.

Based upon the materials presented in this thesis it is concluded that in many cases *dang-kis* are effective psychotherapists. This study provides a new appreciation of the universal components of effective psychotherapy and that they are present in both modern and traditional forms of therapy. It encourages Taiwanese pastoral counselors to investigate the possibilities and prospects for creative cooperation and/or coexistence with *dang-kis* and other folk healers.

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INTRODUCTION

MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

"Psychotherapy and mysticism have long been seen as polar opposites, the rational and scientific versus the intuitive."¹ This statement raises a research question: Is it possible to defend the contribution of shamanic healing (folk healing) in a modern, scientific context? In Taiwan shamanic healing has thrived despite the recent rapid development of modern psychiatry and the increasing tendency of the mentally disturbed to seek help at the modern mental hospitals in Taipei.² The persistence of shamans and their growing popularity in Taiwan indicates the significant function of folk healing. Today folk healing is utilized not only by the old and illiterate, but also by the young and intelligent. Such evidence shows that shamanism still has an important place in

¹ Arthur Deikman, *The Observing Self: Mysticism and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), in the front flap.

² Wen-Shing Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," in *Culture-Bound Syndromes, Ethnopsychiatry, and Alternate Therapies*, ed. W. P. Lebra (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 164.

Taiwanese society and merits study. I was highly motivated to learn what the Taiwanese shamans can teach modern psychotherapists about the religious, social, and cultural dimensions of illness and healing.

Counseling as a profession is still very new to most Taiwanese. Other than the earlier practice of the psychiatric department in hospitals and the guidance center in schools, the first professional counseling center, the Taipei Christian Family Counseling Center, was set up by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan in 1972. I served as assistant to the director and later as director of the center in its first six years. When I began my career in the ministry of professional counseling I was ignorant of my traditional and cultural roots and overlooked their significance in clinical practice. This was mainly because the counseling theories and techniques practiced by Taiwanese counselors have been almost completely influenced by Western professionals. However, my own clinical experiences showed that when I tried to impose or transplant Western theories and techniques in counseling Taiwanese clients, the outcome was often discouraging.

Taiwanese society has been in transition caught between new and old, modern and tradition, and computer and ancestor. This has created a very complex, confusing, and difficult clinical situation for counseling profes-

sionals in Taiwan. To a great extent, every counseling situation in Taiwan has a cross-cultural context and faces cross-cultural problems.

Only later my professional experiences have shown me that in my practice, I had been unconsciously led along the way which for centuries has been deeply cultivated in the Taiwanese culture. Ever since I experienced the joy of reconnecting with my cultural roots I have had a strong drive to move forward on my personal and professional growth journey. I hoped to become personally more aware of my self and my cultural inheritance, and become professionally a counselor who is more competent in cross-cultural counseling. Having experienced growth through that reconnection, I was motivated to develop in the future counseling theories and techniques indigenous to the local culture. I realized that to be aware of the folk model of psychotherapy in Taiwan is another significant step toward achieving my professional goals. Thus, I have conducted this study seriously, believing it will stimulate my further growth both personally and professionally.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The academic study of shamanism started with an ethnographic focus in the late seventeenth century, such

as that of Y. Ides.³ It progressed to contemporary cross-cultural studies, such as those of Mircea Eliade.⁴ Most of the early studies of shamanism emphasized it as an origin of religious development. Then a generation ago, shamanism was studied and considered to be either a psychopathic phenomenon or an archaic type of black magic. Modern scholars, however, have convincingly learned the complexity, the dynamic, and the rich spiritual meanings and psychotherapeutic effects of shamanistic healing.⁵

There are shamanic elements in ancient texts such as *Chu-Tzu* (*The Poems*) and *Choer-Ger* (*The Nine Songs*). Although I am not able to appreciate fully his literary analysis of ancient Chinese shamanism, I admire Ping-Leung Chan's extensive efforts in the study of "Chu-Tzu and Shamanism in Ancient China."⁶ In other research on ancient Chinese shamanism, *The Nine Songs: A Study of*

³ Berthold Laufer, "Origin of the Word Shaman," *American Anthropologist* 19 (1957): 361-71.

⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (New York: Bollinger Foundation, 1970).

⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 56.

⁶ Ping-Leung Chan, "Chu-Tzu and Shamanism in Ancient China," (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1972).

Shamanism in Ancient China, Chu Yuan provides valuable historical information on the subject.⁷

Relatively, the researchers and clinicians have paid very little attention to Taiwanese shamanism, even though it has been popular to a broad range of the Taiwanese people. Taiwanese shamanism as an academic study has had only a short history, starting in the early 1970's. In the past, however, there have been medical and anthropological studies of Taiwanese shamanism. Only very little previous work of psychiatric study of shamanism in Taiwan has been done by psychiatrists. A psychotherapeutic study of Taiwanese shamanism from a pastoral counselor's perspective has not yet been addressed. Thus, both the difficulty and the contribution of this study lie therein.

Since only some journal articles and a few book chapters related to the subject have been published, it would not be appropriate here to review this small amount of literature. But three pioneering researchers and writers on the subject should be respectfully acknowledged. They are: Professor Yih-Yuan Li (ethnologist and anthropologist), Dr. Wen-Shing Tseng (psychiatrist), and Dr.

⁷ Chu Yuan, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955).

Arthur Kleinman (American psychiatrist trained in anthropology). Among them Kleinman has done more extensive studies than the other two. In the book *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture*, Kleinman reports on his studies of health care in Taiwan. He describes his observations of clinical interviews between various medical practitioners--folk healers and Chinese style and Western style physicians--and their patients. This book demonstrates the critical role of social science in clinical medicine and psychiatry. He urges an integration of social and cultural methods in the routine training of physicians.¹³

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology of this thesis has relied on two methods: library research and field study. The whole methodological approach to this study was more than a description of the data and sources available in the library. This study has the additional strength of a field study in Taiwan. The library research was completed

¹³ For details please read Arthur Kleinman, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

at the libraries of the School of Theology at Claremont, the Claremont Colleges, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the Institute of Ethnology in Taipei. Other important data for this study have been based on field materials collected during my four-week study trip to Taiwan in February, 1986.

During the field trip I traveled to more than ten villages, towns, and cities visiting the shaman shrines. Before and/or after attending the shamanic healing session in the shrines, I interviewed some of the shamans and their assistants and clients. Although the major portion of my field information was acquired through unstructured interviewing and observing, the outcome was encouraging and significant. I felt encouraged to conduct such a field study because of the friendly reception and cooperation of the shamans visited. They permitted my sitting or walking around during their treatments, and they allowed taking notes and pictures, and even recording their consultations. On many occasions they took an active part in the interview with me and/or encouraged their assistants and clients to cooperate with me as well.

In addition to my visits to the shaman shrines much stimulation was offered me by interviewing four leading scholars and experts in their fields. They are: Professor Yih-Yuan Li (ethnologist), Professor Chew-Chung Wu

(senior social worker), Dr. Fang-Yuen Tong (professor of Taiwanese folk religion), and Dr. Jung-Kwang Wen (psychiatrist). Judging the relative value of materials and insights used in this research, I have given much attention to primary sources acquired from the field trip. Indeed, it was a striking, fruitful, and unforgettable field experience.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

An important presupposition for this study is that Taiwanese shamans function to a significant extent as psychotherapists. Thus the major research questions for the study are:

1. What is Taiwanese shamanic healing?
2. Is it effective?
3. If so, what are the major factors enabling its effectiveness?
4. How does Taiwanese shamanic healing compare with modern psychotherapy?
5. What can pastoral counselors learn from shamanic healing about the meaning of healing and the nature of psychotherapy?

Specifically, this study has three objectives. First, to fill a gap in the literature by providing a description of the historical, religious, and cultural backgrounds behind Taiwanese shamanism. This has been

largely ignored, especially by the Christian church in Taiwan. This research attempts to provide evidence to convince pastoral counselors to take seriously the cultural and religious issues in their profession. In so doing, I believe a more holistic view of the healing ministry will be achieved.

A second purpose of this study is to demonstrate that in their professional capacity the Taiwanese shamans are successful psychotherapists. This study, therefore, aims to broaden and deepen our knowledge through a descriptive, analytical, and evaluative study of the shamanic healing in Taiwanese society. It is hoped that this will provide for modern psychotherapists a significant perspective from which to emphasize the importance of cross-cultural counseling in their practice.

The last goal of this study is to draw as many implications as possible for pastoral counselors. It is my hope that these implications will stimulate the exploration of culturally relevant approaches to counseling so that counseling professionals may function more effectively in Taiwan. The result of this study will be to move one step further in the long and challenging journey of developing indigenous theories and techniques of pastoral counseling in Taiwan.

Apparently, in many respects Taiwanese shamanism

has possessed special interest as a significant subject for study. We may learn from the old ways of shamanic healing to improve our modern approaches of psychotherapy. As Confucius said, "One should always obtain new knowledge by studying the old."⁷

SCOPE AND LIMITS OF THE STUDY

Taiwanese shamanism is only one of the many ancient and often utilized folk healings. Indeed, in my field trip I was repeatedly struck by the importance of the role that the shamans and other folk healers play in Taiwan. I discovered how complicated and complex is the mental health care system in Taiwan and how limited is the scope of this study. Much more research in the whole area of mental health care in Taiwan remains to be done. The scope of this study is mainly to explore and analyze *dang-ki* healing in the context of psychotherapy.

Due to the limits of both time and the number of interviews, my field research was not conducted systematically and the field observations and interviews were rather casual. Therefore, a long-term study that could

⁷ Confucius, *The Analects* (Taipei: Chunghua Books, 1976), 2:11.

have included a series of follow-up case studies of some selective shamans and their clients was not possible. An important area for future research of Taiwanese shamanism should include systematic follow-up studies with careful evaluation of its therapeutic outcome.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a technical limitation in writing this thesis: it is written in English rather than my native language. This means certain ideas and thoughts may not have been freely and fully expressed. At the same time, by using English I am aware that many Taiwanese readers are excluded because they do not read English. In cross-cultural writing such as this thesis sometimes English translation may not be accurate or properly express the original meanings of Taiwanese terms. When there appears to be no satisfactory English translation for some Chinese words, I will use the Taiwanese system of romanization in *italic* form.

PART ONE
THE CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF DANG-KI HEALING

CHINESE ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Filial Piety and Ancestor Worship

For more than twenty-five centuries, Confucius has given the Chinese virtues for living based on stable family life. It is stated in *Hsiao-Ching* (*The Book of Filial Piety*), Confucius said, ".... Filial piety is the root of all virtues, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching."¹ By the virtue of filial piety family ties are strong and ancestor worship has flourished. Ancestor worship with filial piety as its core is regarded as the most distinctive and fundamental expression of Chinese humanity. In Chinese folk culture the practice of ancestor worship is very ancient and indigenous, but still very popular, and important to this date. To a great extent, ancestor worship is really the corner stone of the Chinese culture.

¹ Paul Sih, ed., *Hsiao-Ching or The Book of Filial Piety* (New York: St. John's University Press, 1961), ch. 1.

Traditional Chinese society is kinship-oriented and centered in communal ancestor worship. Today, ancestor worship is still the most vital factor in the Taiwanese society; it continues to hold a position of supreme consequence in the religious and social life of the people.² Indeed, among both educated and uneducated Taiwanese, the practice of ancestor worship remains very popular. In practice, the importance of this cult in the Taiwanese family is indicated by the ancestral altar in the main hall (or ancestral hall) of every house. The altar holds a number of wooden spirit tablets, each of them representing a deceased ancestor. C. K. Yang describes the tablets in the following manner.

A spirit tablet is about four inches wide, eight inches high, and one inch thick, standing on a wooden pedestal. On the front is written the name of the deceased, his/her family status, and official government ranks and titles, if any. On the back is written the hour, day, month, and year of the birth and death of the deceased.³

² Ming-Chung Chiu, "Two Types of Folk Piety: A Comparative Study of Two Folk Religions in Formosa," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1970), p. 226.

³ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 406.

The Significance of Ancestor Worship

Culturally speaking, the chief significance of ancestor worship is its emphasis on traditional familism. S. G. Su states that, "Ancestor worship has been perpetuated not primarily for mysterious or religious reasons as most Western observers imagine, but as a continuation of remembrance, respect, and reverence to the deceased ancestors."⁴ To Confucius, the main concern of ancestor worship is with the continued remembrance of reverence of the ancestors rather than with the worship of them as deities, even though the word worship is used. As Chiping Yu puts it,

Confucius was more concerned about maintaining the continuity of the tradition and solidarity with the forefathers than about appeasing them with extravagant materials offerings with a view to obtaining their protection and blessings.⁵

There are important secular functions in ancestor worship. From a sociological aspect, it aims at cultivating kinship values such as filial piety, family loyalty, and the continuity of the family lineage. However, from a

⁴ S. G. Su, *The Chinese Family System* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 84.

⁵ Chiping Yu, "Confucian and Biblical Concepts of Filial Piety," (Th.D. dissertation, Boston University School of Theology, 1984), p.49.

psychological viewpoint, it is basically a device to cope with the emotionally shattering and socially disintegrating event of the death of an intimate member in the family.⁶

However, scholars such as Milton Chiu and C. K. Yang observe that ancestor worship is intimately related to folk religion. Since Chinese folk religion is also mixed with Buddhist and Taoist traditions, the concept and practice of ancestor worship have a religious dimension as well. Religiously speaking, the basic concept that directs the practice of ancestor worship is the folk belief in life after death and the spiritual power of the deceased ancestors. Studying the folk religion, Chiu learns that, "The ancestors are not only alive but also powerful in affecting the fortunes of the living. They can endow blessings as well as punishment, depending on the filial piety of their descendants."⁷ In folk tradition the sense of fear and mystery surrounding death is lessened by delicate funerals and regular ancestor worship.

⁶ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, p. 29.

⁷ Milton Chiu, *The Tao of Chinese Religion* (New York: University Press of America, 1984), p. 344.

The above discussion shows that there are two orientations of ancestor worship and the boundary between them is very thin. They are, first, the more ethical orientation of Confucian ancestor worship and, second, the more religious orientation of Buddhist and Taoist (or the folk religion) ancestor worship. The two orientations may best be distinguished by introducing two Chinese words *pai* and *chi* in replacing the English word **worship** which is too vague in the Chinese context. The word *pai* is comparable to Western ideas of worship in the religious sense. The word *chi*, however, means sacrifice or making offerings in the secular sense which is often used in civic ceremonies. In summary, when viewing the whole issue of ancestor worship, we should consider that it has both secular and sacred qualities, and that the two are often mixed. Yang puts it well, which says:

Ancestor worship itself is not an independent factor that gives rise to a system of kinship ethics, but rather it uses its supernatural premises to justify and enforce the Confucian values designed for the operation of the kinship group. Thus, the supernatural notion of the existence of the ancestor's soul justifies the ethical requirement of ancestor worship as an expression of the sentiment of filial piety.⁸

⁸ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, pp. 285-86.

CHINESE WORLDVIEW

Yin-Yang Theory

At the core, traditional Chinese thinking has been dualistic. Derived from this dualistic idea the Chinese invented the *yin-yang* theory in which they believe the phenomenal world is the result of interaction between the *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* represents negativity, moon, earth, darkness, coldness, femininity, death, and even numbers, while *yang* signifies positivity, sun, heaven, light, warmth, masculinity, life, and odd numbers. The Chinese character of *yin* and *yang* signify the shadowy and sunny sides of the same mountain, which indicates the idea of two sides of the same existence very similar to the Western saying: "two sides of the same coin."⁷ With this observation the Chinese believe that all things must have two sides, two aspects, two genders, or two forces. *Yin-yang* are not good-evil; both are valuable and necessary aspects of the unity of nature. In other words, they are opposites, but not opponents. They blend into one another. They are the alternating aspects of nature.

⁷ Milton Chiu, p.147.

According to *yin-yang* theory, polarity is part of all existence. It divides and differentiates and even creates tension between the two poles. But it does not necessarily conflict and tear apart the two poles. They work like an electric charge between the plus and minus poles to create balance and dynamism.¹⁰ A *yang* state is where *yang* shows predominance. When *yin* exceeds, there is a *yin* state. The two states fluctuate: as one rises, the other recedes, and vice versa. When *yin* and *yang* are balanced, there is harmony, whereas an imbalance leads to disharmony. Harmony in *yin-yang* theory means reconciling differences and moving toward a unity. Needless to say *yin-yang* theory has left a profound influence on the Chinese way of thinking and living. For the Chinese the goal of living is to be in harmony with nature, with others, and within oneself. Illness and catastrophes are generally attributed to an imbalance of *yin* and *yang*.

Basically, what the theory of *yin-yang* tries to emphasize is the ideal of "unity in duality" and "duality in unity" and avoidance of the extreme of undifferentiated monism and dichotomous dualism.¹¹ The Chinese regard the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 149.

universe as a whole in which the natural world and human society are closely bonded. In short, the Chinese world view which has evolved from *yin-yang* theory is holistic polarity. Working with these ideas, Chinese thought and Chinese medical tradition have developed five principles of *yin* and *yang*. They are:

1. All things have aspects: a *yin* aspect and a *yang* aspect.
2. Any *yin* or *yang* aspect can be further divided into *yin* and *yang* within itself.
3. *Yin* and *yang* mutually create each other: they depend on each other for definition.
4. *Yin* and *yang* control each other: *yin* and *yang* balance each other.
5. *Yin* and *yang* transform into each other. This constant transformation is the source of all change.¹²

When these principle are used to interpret medical phenomena, the *yang* state, an excess of *yang*, symbolizes over-activity, and hence hyperfunction. An excess of *yin* means hypofunction.¹³ A modern interpretation of *yin* and *yang* in physiological terms would be the interrelationship of the sympathetic and para-sympathetic nervous

¹² Ted Kaptchuk, *The Web That Has No Weaver* (New York: Congdon & Weed, 1983), pp. 8-11.

¹³ S. F. Palos, *The Chinese Art of Healing* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), p. 26.

systems. An excess of *yang* is overstimulation of the sympathetic system, and an excess of *yin* produces over-activity of the vagus nerve.¹⁴ Chinese medical treatment is based on the principle of a *yin* and *yang* balance. To correct imbalance, treatment often involves tonification, stimulating the lack; or sedation, reducing the excess and achieving a balance.¹⁵

Fong-Sui (Geomancy)

Through the application of the *yin-yang* and the *wu-shing* (The Five Phases) theories,¹⁶ a wide variety of pseudo-sciences developed in Chinese society, such as *fong-sui* (geomancy or wind-water).¹⁷ The geomantic theory

¹⁴ G. C. Beau, *Chinese Medicine* (New York: Avon Books, 1972), p. 26.

¹⁵ Palos, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶ The *wu-shing* theory is an attempt to classify phenomena in terms of five quintessential processes, represented by the symbols: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth. Specifically, each phase denotes a category of related functions and qualities. The *Five Phases* theory is a system of correspondences and patterns that subsume events and things, especially in relationship to their dynamics. For further discussions, please see Kaptchuk.

¹⁷ The *fong* means wind, and *sui* water. According to *Webster's Universal Dictionary* "geomancy" is "a kind of divination by figure or lines, formed by dots or points, originally on the earth and afterward on paper."

of *fong-sui* has long been a widely practiced art in Chinese history. In his classic work, J. Groot illuminates this point as follows:

Fong-sui consequently denotes the atmospherical influences, which bear absolute sway over the fate of men. in a hyperbolic sense, however, *fong-sui* means a quasi-scientific system supposed to teach men where and how to build graves, temples, and dwellings, in order that the dead, the gods, and the living may be located therein exclusively, or as far as possible, under the auspicious influences of nature.¹⁸

Fong-sui is commonly believed to be the mystical determination of fortune by the acts of people on their environment. Francis Hsu says that *fong-sui* may be applied to the location of a house, a graveyard, a tomb, a city wall, or to any place inhabited by living or dead human beings.¹⁹ The merits or demerits of a location are interpreted in accordance with the *yin-yang* factors and the Five Phases, which are considered to be invisibly linked with the fortune, and misfortune of people and the entire community.²⁰

¹⁸ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan: An Anthropological Inquiry," in *Culture-Bound Syndromes, Ethnopsychiatry, and Alternate Therapies*, ed. William Lebra (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 186.

¹⁹ Francis Hsu, *Under the Ancestor's Shadow* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), p. 46.

²⁰ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, p. 263.

Today, many Taiwanese of varied socio-economic standing still often consult geomancers in the hope of gaining good fortune. Psychologically, *fong-sui*, like other forms of divination, increases one's confidence as he/she turns to face an uncertain world. Yang explains this psychological effect of *fong-sui* and says,

By locating a building or a grave on a proper site and facing it in the auspicious direction in accordance with the rules of *fong-sui*, one minimizes his/her doubts and fears and assumes the future to be predictable and good for one self and for one's descendants, as the invisible factors of chance were thought to be under control.²¹

Actually, the basic concept of *fong-sui* agrees with modern ecological concern for harmony with one's environment.

²¹ Ibid., p. 265.

CHAPTER 2

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF DANG-KI HEALING

THE CHINESE FOLK RELIGION

The Religion of the Masses

Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism have often been regarded as the three religions of the Chinese. The phrase "the three religions" is misleading and leads to a question often asked by Westerners: Is Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism the most popular religion in China or Taiwan? This is why in the past, the three religions have all received a good deal of attention by both Chinese and Western scholars. Yet there is, in addition to these three religions, a religion which has not received adequate academic attention though it has maintained the most consistent and popular place in Chinese history. This religion is known as *Ming-Chian-Chung-Chiao* or Folk Religion in English. During the long Chinese history the devastating criticism on folk religion has been by Confucian scholars and the intellectual elite within its own culture. Both M. C. Chiu and W. T. Chan call our attention to the fact that the study of folk religion has been singularly ignored by intellectuals and scholars. Chiu

says that there have been many works done on the study of the elite tradition of Chinese religions, but only very few on the mass tradition of folk religion.¹ Chan states,

When one comes to study the religion of the masses, one is appalled at the neglect by Chinese writers of this subject. The modern Chinese mind is strongly distinguished by its mass consciousness.... But folk religion has been singularly ignored (by the writers). Not a single book on Chinese folk religion has been published in the last five decades.²

Although all four of these traditions have contributed significantly to Chinese religious life, the most popular religion has been the religion of the masses--the folk religion. By the masses is meant the common Chinese people who constitute about eighty-five percent of the total population.

The Development of the Folk Religion

The Chinese are traditionally very deeply religious people. As is similar in many other nations, the starting point of Chinese religion is animism. Historically, the animism existed long before the development of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism and it served as the

¹ Ming-Chung Chiu, p. ii.

² Wing Tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978), pp. 144-45.

basic foundation for these three great religions. Chinese animism was supplemented and mixed with the three religions at various times over the centuries, finally becoming the religion of the masses called Folk Religion. The historical development of these four religions is shown in Diagram 1 as follows:

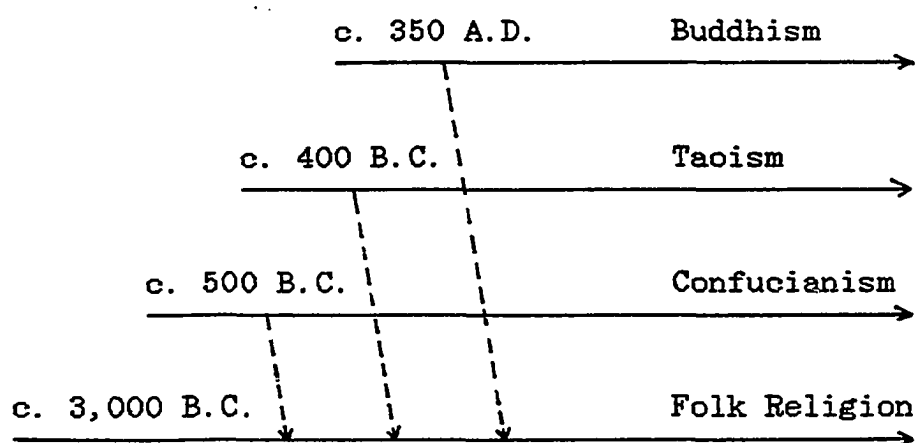


Diagram 1

We may say that folk religion is a rather thorough mixture of all these religious elements. Thus Chiu defines the folk religion as a "syncretistic folk cult."³ We may also correctly say that folk religion is behind and within the three religions. W. Chan firmly adds that "it

³ Milton Chiu, *The Tao of Chinese Religion*, p. 197.

cuts across, includes, and extends beyond the three religions."⁴ The relationships of these four religions can be illustrated by the following Diagram 2.

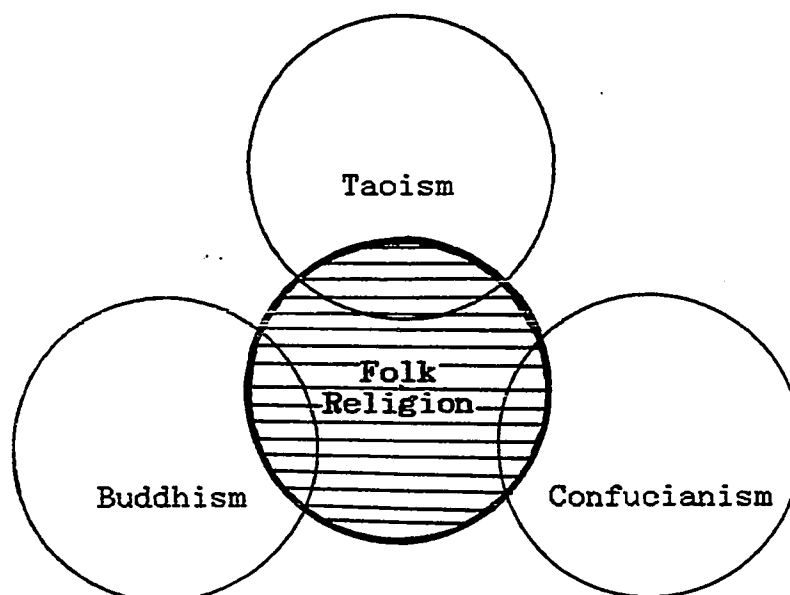


Diagram 2

Folk Religion in Taiwan

Culturally and religiously, the Taiwanese people have remained oriented toward mainland China. It is said that while folk religion has declined on the mainland, it has flourished in Taiwan. Chiu describes the popularity of folk religion in Taiwan as follows:

⁴ Wing Tsit Chan, *Religious Trends*, p. 143.

In a sense, folk religion has become the religion of the Taiwanese people and its temples the center of Taiwanese society through three centuries of the history of the island.... Currently, more than 85 percent of the Taiwanese people are faithful adherents of the folk religion. This includes not only the old and illiterate, but also the young and intelligent.⁵

This type of religion has often been characterized as nature-culture religion or cosmic religion. It has also been termed polytheistic religion in John Hutchison's classification of types of the world religion.⁶ In their practice of folk religion, Taiwanese worship thousands of deities, late legendary figures, natural objects, and countless spirits. In every village or town there are large numbers of temples devoted to the gods of folk religion. Every household in the traditional family has its own gods to be worshipped by the family members. Folk temples have been the place of refuge at the time of crisis and suffering, the setting for communal celebration in festivals, as well as the symbolic center for reaffirmation of Taiwanese integrity and identity.⁷ To a great extent, folk religion has been diffused into every aspect of

⁵ Ming-Chung Chiu, pp. 2-3.

⁶ John Hutchison, *Paths of Faith*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1981), p. 14.

⁷ Ibid., p. 174.

Taiwanese life--the social, cultural, spiritual, familial, and individual. Today the cult of ancestor worship and the folk healing of shamanism are the two most popular folk practices in which the manifestation of folk religion is most clearly seen.

THE FOLK RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Taiwanese people hold many folk religious beliefs. Among them the most directly related to shamanic healing are: *shen* (god) and *kui* (ghost), *ming* (fate), and spirit marriage.

Shen (God) and Kui (Ghost)

As has been stated earlier, the Chinese world view is basically a holistic polarity. From earliest times, the Chinese have been impressed with the dualistic nature of spirits: either beneficent gods (*shen*) or malevolent ghosts (*kui*). They believe that there are two souls in each person in terms of *yin* and *yang*: *poh* (with *yin* nature) and *hun* (with *yang* nature). *Hun* and *poh* are united with the body at the time of birth and separated at the time of death. When they are separated, *hun* becomes *shen* if one was good, while *poh* turns to *kui* if one was bad. In folk belief one's fortunes are largely controlled

by the blessing and protecting of *shen*. On the contrary *kui* at work in the world cause all sorts of disorder, destruction, disasters, and illness.

It is believed that while *shen* (gods) are worshipped *kui* (ghosts) can be propitiated if they are well provided for by their descendants with ritual offerings, such as food, clothing, paper money, and paper houses. When the *kui* has no descendant to provide for it or has not been well provided for with offerings as the years go by, it will attack human beings.⁶ Other than the propitiation of *kui*, the only beings that can confront them successfully are the *shen*. The Taiwanese shamans, when they are possessed by the *shen*, are the religious experts who know how to deal with *kui*.

Spirit Marriage

In the traditional family when each socially mature person dies, a tablet is made for him/her and placed on the ancestral altar. The qualification for being so treated is the attainment of parenthood.⁷ There are two

⁶ David Jordan, *God, Ghosts, and Ancestors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 32-33.

⁷ Maurice Freedman, ed., *Family and Kinship in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), p. 165.

possible remedies for a person who dies before reaching parenthood: spirit marriage or adoption. However, as T. Y. Lin writes, the remedy through adoption is for deceased men only,

... In such a patrilineal society as China, there has never been a spirit bridegroom but always a spirit bride.... I found that as a boy died before he married, and comes back to his parents in dreams, he would simply ask them to find an offspring for him, possibly from one of his brother's sons or any classified nephew. In this way he would be entitled to have a place in the family shrine with many of his forebears.¹⁰

A woman, however, takes her descent-line membership from her husband. No husband, no descendants means no participation in the ritual of ancestor worship, either as an ancestor or during ancient times even as a worshipper.¹¹ Since women have descendants only through their husbands, a spirit marriage can be arranged when it is desired. Normally, spirit marriage occurs when a deceased girl's ghost appears to her family in a dream and asks to be married. In some cases, however, spirit marriages occur differently. Instead of appearing in a dream to

¹⁰ T. Y. Lin, *Selected Taiwanese Customs* (Pingtung, Taiwan: Pu-Tien Books, 1968), p. 98.

¹¹ Tzyy-Kuang Lou, *Marriage Customs* (Taipei: Shan-Wu Publishing House, 1968), p. 23.

her parents to demand a husband, the ghost strikes misfortune upon her natal family. This usually takes the form of illness of one or more family members. When the illness is not cured by ordinary means, the family turns to shamans or other folk healers and learns of the plight of the ghost.¹²

When a spirit marriage is so desired, attempts must be made to determine the deceased person's choice of a mate. This may be a living person or even another deceased person. Ying-tau Wu reports that in some cases the natal family of the ghost hires a "matchmaker" to find a poor country lad as husband, rewarding him with such a generous dowry that he can use it as a brideprice when he takes a live bride later.¹³ Based on his field study in a Taiwanese village David Jordan describes a traditional form of choosing the mate for spirit marriage as follows:

A groom is found by the family by laying "bait" in the middle of a road. This usually takes the form of a red envelope with money in it. A passer-by sooner or later picks up the envelope and immediately the family come out of hiding beside the road and announce to the young man that he is the chosen bridegroom.¹⁴

¹² Jordan, p. 141.

¹³ Ying-tau Wu, *Taiwanese Folklore* (Taipei: Ku-Tin Books, 1970), p. 143.

¹⁴ Jordan, p. 140.

The spirit bride is married to her "groom" in a rite designed to resemble an ordinary wedding as closely as possible, even though the bride is represented by an ancestral tablet. No affinity is established between the couple's family. The only obligation the groom and his family have is to accommodate the ancestral tablet of the bride on their family altar and to provide it with sacrifices.¹⁵ Finally it should be noted that spirit marriage for all its popularity is not something done with pride but rather as a shameful thing in Taiwan.

Ming (Fate)

The idea of predetermination of fate is a very vital part of the folk religious belief and is prominent in the Confucian doctrines as well. As the proverbs say,

There is a day to be born, and a time to die; life has its road and death its place.

Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honours depend upon heaven.

Listen to heaven and follow your fate, and don't struggle against your fate.¹⁶

For the believers the belief in *ming* is often

¹⁵ Jordan, p. 141.

¹⁶ Clifford Plopper, *Chinese Religion Seen Through the Proverbs* (New York: Paragon Books, 1969), p. 291.

followed by the practice of divination. Confucius himself was concerned with knowing his fate. Perhaps this accounts for his great interest in *I-Ching*, a manual on divination which became very popular among early Confucianists.¹⁷ Today the word *ming* (fate) has become one of the most commonly used terms among the Taiwanese folk believers. This is why divination and fortune-telling are the most popular means to know one's fate in Taiwan.

With this view of human life many phases and important events in one's life are interpreted as being already determined by fate. For example, wealth and poverty are both predestined, marriages are predetermined, and illness is also a question of destiny. In the belief of *ming*, all the fortunes are not eternal. The Chinese often say that there are times of good fortune as well as times of bad fortune. It is difficult to predict when one's fortune will change, but it seems that this change is cyclical. Nevertheless, the Chinese people are still encouraged to do good rather than evil, because only the good deeds will produce the good destiny in the future. The best way is to cooperate with fate and think of the

¹⁷ Alan Gates "Christianity and Animism: China and Taiwan," (D.Miss. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971), p. 50.

longer run, and make life as good as possible!¹⁸

¹⁸ For further discussion on the subject *ming* please read Plopper, pp. 290-310.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DANG-KI HEALING

SHAMANISM IN GENERAL

The Term Shaman

Most authorities in the field believe that shamanism originated in North Asia. The word **shaman** is a transliteration of the Tungusic word "saman" or "hamman."¹ The word functions as both a noun and a verb. As a noun it means "one who is excited, moved, raised"; as a verb it means "to know in an ecstatic manner."² An early reference to the word "shaman" was by two Dutch diplomats to Russia, E. Ysbrant Ides and Adam Brand. Ides's writings, published in 1698, described the family shaman of a Tungus group. Later several European writers used the word shaman to describe such aboriginal religious personalities in Siberia. In 1875, A. H. Sayce included the term in an

¹ The Tungus is a central Siberian tribe of which many divisions can be found from the arctic region to the Chinese frontier. See M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), p. 144.

² Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. xiii.

article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.³

There seems to have been some degree of confusion and controversy over the term "shaman." Used in the narrowest sense, it refers to the folk healers of the Tungus of Siberia. In general usage, however, it has been applied to almost all magical healers. According to Geri-Ann Galanti they are called by many names: diviner, medicine man, witchdoctor, psychic reader.⁴ Eliade argues that,

Surely, the shaman is also a medicine man and magician who is believed to cure and to perform magical miracles. But beyond this, he is a psychopomp, and may also be priest, mystic, and poet.... It seems to serve no purpose, for we already have the terms "magician" or "sorcerer" to express notions as unlike and as ill-defined as "primitive magic" or "primitive mysticism." Therefore, we consider it advantageous to restrict the use of the words shaman and shamanism, precisely to avoid misunderstanding and to cast a clearer light on the history of "magic" and "sorcery."⁵

In this study, the terms **shaman** and **shamanism** are used in a broad sense to include the shamanic healing in

³ Berthold Laufer, "Origin of the Word Shaman," *American Anthropologist* 19 (1957): 361-71.

⁴ Geri-Ann Galanti, "The Psychic Reader as Shaman and Psychotherapist" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1981), p. 31.

⁵ Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 3.

different cultures, whereas the term "*dang-ki*" is used only in the Taiwanese context.

The Worldwide Shamanism

There are certain characteristic shamanic ritual practices and techniques that can be identified and discussed as shamanism. Dennis McKenna believes that, of all the diverse religious institutions elaborated since before the beginning of recorded history, shamanism is one of the most general and is probably one of the most archaic as well.⁶ Shamanism is one of the most general human institutions. A sociologist of religion, Barbara Hargrove, agrees that "The first form of specialization in the religious organization of human society may be found in shamanism."⁷ Shamanism has remained vital, adapting itself to the ways of almost all of the world's various cultures. A common thread seems to connect all worldwide shamanism.

Shamanism, although its most complete expression

⁶ Dennis McKenna and Terence McKenna, *The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens, and the I-Ching* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 8.

⁷ Barbara Hargrove, *The Sociology of Religion* (Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing Co., 1979), p. 71.

is found in the arctic and central Asian regions, is actively encountered in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and North America.⁹ It is interesting to learn that shamanic techniques are strikingly similar the world over, even for people whose cultures are quite different in other respects, and who have been separated by oceans and continents for tens of thousands of years. Michael Harner explains the reason for this phenomenon by simply saying: because it works! He states,

Over many thousands of years, through trial and error, people in ecological and cultural situations that were often extremely different came nonetheless to the same conclusions as to the basic principles and methods of shamanic power and healing.⁷

According to most authors, shamanism is distinctly characterized by the phenomenon of ecstasy. For Eliade, shamanism is precisely a technique of ecstasy. He defines the shaman as a master of ecstasy.¹⁰ The specific functions of the shaman vary from culture to culture. Some shamans serve as entertainers, healers, diviners, priests,

⁹ "Shamanism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed., pp. 462-64.

⁷ Michael Harner, *The Way of The Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), pp. xiii, 53.

¹⁰ Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 4.

spiritual guides, or dream-interpreters, while the most important function of the Taiwanese shaman is healing. In short, the primary role of the shaman is as a mediator between the people and the supernatural through direct contact with the sacred world and its powers.

SHAMANISM IN CHINA

The Term Wu

There were both male and female shamans in China. In most Chinese literature the term *wu* is used to refer to both male and female shamans. However, Meng-chia Chen discovers that *wu* originally referred to the female shamans for their important role of invoking the rain gods to send rain to meet agricultural needs in the prehistoric age. By the time of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1751-1121 B.C.), the official duties multiplied in the royal court so that male shamans had increased in number and power.¹¹

In the Shang dynasty, the Chinese character for the male shaman was *shih* (𤯂) and the female shaman, *wu* (巫). This graph *chien* (見, sight) in the character

¹¹ Meng-Chia Chen, "The Myths and Shamanism of the Shang Dynasty," *Yen-Chin Reports* 20 (1936): 4878-576.

shih suggests special powers of sight for the male shaman in the ancient time. "This is not strange," Jan Groot points out, "for the Chinese people who associated the yang principle of light and brightness with the male sex (*shih*)."¹² In the yin-yang theory the female element is identified with yin or that which is damp and darkness. This suggests one reason why *wu* (female shaman) was so popular in early Chinese society with its heavy dependence upon rain. Furthermore, the female shamans (*wu*) operated within the sphere of the *kui* (ghosts) power. In contrast, the male shamans (*shih*) were animated by the *shen* (gods), they were a complementary power to the female *wu*.¹³ It should be noted that since the Shang dynasty the term "*wu*" has been used for both male and female shamans.

The Role and Function of Wu

Shamanism, or *wuism* as Groot calls it, appears to have dominated the religious life of Chinese society from peasants to emperors prior to the time when Confucianism

¹² Jan Groot, *The Religious System of China* reprint ed. (Taipei: Shangwu Book Co., 1964), p. 1192.

¹³ Alan Gates, "Christianity and Animism: China and Taiwan," (D.Miss. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971), pp. 35, 55.

became the state religion.¹⁴ In ancient China, the *wu's* political power and social status were regarded much more highly than at present. The *wus* served as royal priests, physicians, political advisers, historians, and artists who could sing, dance, and compose beautiful poetry, and their contribution to the birth of Chinese culture should always be acknowledged and acclaimed. Most important of all they were first-rank mystics who knew gods, spirits, and the universe and sought the eternal harmony of all things.¹⁵ Clearly, *wuism* has had a very significant and broad impact on Chinese religion and culture in its long history.

The prejudice against shamanism went hand in hand with the rise and spread of Confucianism. After the establishment of Confucianism as a state religion in the first century B.C., the governing classes tended more and more to look down upon shamans. They were regarded at best as socially inferior and had the same low status as professional entertainers and technicians who were not regarded as gentlemen (*chun-tzu*). In approximately 30 B.C. shamanic performances at the Chinese court were

¹⁴ Groot, p. 1205.

¹⁵ Milton Chiu, p. 317.

abolished.¹⁶

In Chinese folk society the work of the *wu* covered even broader areas than in the court. Gradually, the primary function of the *wu* came to provide healing in order to meet the public demands. The *wu*'s role as healer derived from the folk Chinese belief what illness resulted from possession by *kui* (ghost). The medical role of the *wu* is evidenced by the subsequent use of its Chinese graph denoting the medical arts, *yi* (醫). Some hold that the *wu* (巫) radical in the lower part of this character indicates the influence of the *wu* in Chinese medical history.¹⁷ The primary function of the *wu* as healer is also clearly shown by the fact that the term *wu* is frequently mentioned with the term *yi* (healing/healer). When the terms *wu-yi* are put together they mean a physician who conducts ritual or magical healing, or literally mean a "witch doctor."¹⁸

¹⁶ Yuan, pp. 11-12.

¹⁷ Gates, p. 56.

¹⁸ Ker-Ming Lin, "Traditional Chinese Medical Beliefs and Their Relevance for Mental Illness and Psychiatry," in *Normal and Abnormal Behavior in Chinese Culture*, ed. Arthur Kleinman (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1981), p. 105.

SHAMANISM IN TAIWAN

The term for the shaman in Taiwan is the Taiwanese word *dang-ki*, means "divining youth." The term implies that a *dang-ki* is youthful, even though this is not always the case. Historically, the *dang-ki* stands directly in the tradition stemming from the *wu* of ancient times in China. In China *wuism* flourished particularly in the two most southern provinces: Fukien and Kwangtung. It eventually followed the immigrants from these two provinces into Southeast Asia and Taiwan in the seventeenth century. Ever since then *dang-ki* healing has been an especially active folk tradition in Taiwan, since most Taiwanese are descendants of migrants from Fukien. In Taiwan during the fifty years (1897-1945) of Japanese occupation, the practice of *dang-ki* healing was forbidden. But its underground activities were not stopped or diminished among the Taiwanese. After that period the new Nationalist Chinese government permitted its use once more. Immediately, *dang-kis* practiced in public again.

Is there any unique manifestation of *dang-ki* healing in Taiwan? In his monumental work, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, Eliade has offered generalizations and interpretations of shamanic healing that are

highly valuable and some of them are applicable to *dang-ki* healing. One of the most important aspects of Eliade's generalization of shamanism is that it is characterized by the shaman's ascent to the heaven or descent to the underworld--shamans have control over their own spirits. As Eliade states that the shaman controls one's spirits in the sense that one, a human being, is able to communicate with the dead, demons, and nature spirits, without thereby becoming their instrument.¹⁹ Likewise, most experts in the field stress that the shaman is one who controls the spirits, not one who is possessed by the spirits. However, my observations and interviews of the *dang-kis* confirmed that the healer's spirit neither ascend nor descend. They are controlled or possessed by gods and by gods only. Deity possession characterizes the Taiwanese shamanism. To be sure, shamans are sometimes found to be "possessed" as with Taiwanese *dang-kis*, but Eliade regards these as exceptional cases.²⁰

¹⁹ Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 6.

²⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC BACKGROUND OF DANG-KI HEALING:

MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN TAIWAN

Today, mental health care in Taiwan is complex and chaotic. Practically, there are three separate systems of mental health care in Taiwan: the traditional Chinese style, the folk religious style, and the modern-Western style. In recent decades, each of these styles has made a significant contribution during which the mental health of the Taiwanese people has been well maintained. Although different kinds of services are available, a client has a tendency to choose a particular one based on his/her belief in that service, the nature of his/her problem, and his/her previous experience with a specific type of service. Increasingly, Taiwanese clients seek two or more kinds of service simultaneously. In the study of preferences among folk, traditional Chinese, and Western-style health care systems, C. C. Wu and Y. H. Hu found that most Taiwanese clients rely upon two or more systems of treatment.¹ It is reported that ninety percent

¹ C. C. Wu and Y. H. Hu, "Many Ways to Health: A Study of 2,000 Rural and Urban Taiwanese Families," *American Journal of Chinese Medicine* 8, no. 4 (1980): 313-330.

of the Taiwanese families combine a variety of approaches in warding off and treating illness.² Wen concludes from his recent study that 95.5 percent of his sample cases were seeking multiple healing systems, including domestic household, folk healing, traditional, and modern styles.³ It is interesting to learn, however, that among the *dang-ki* clients whom I interviewed, about 45 percent indicated that the *dang-ki* was the only healer they called upon for help in dealing with their current illness.

One of the primary concerns in Taiwanese folk religion is to provide healing for its worshippers. For many Taiwanese with an illness any major decision is made with the help of religious rites or folk healers in a temple or a shrine. As Hsu writes,

I do not know of a single village or town (in Taiwan) today that is without shamans, diviners, fortune-tellers, and physiognomists. For a fee or donation, these persons offer to foretell the length of a person's life, and his business prospects, or to determine the marriagability of a

² Arthur Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 187.

³ Jung-Kwang Wen, et al., "The Descriptive Study of A Temple-Like Indigenous Mental Asylum in Southern Taiwan," *Bulletin of Chinese Society of Neurology and Psychiatry* 2, no. 2 (July 1985): 90-125.

couple, or to decide on the ritual suitability of a new housesite or graveyard.⁴

In Taiwan,, especially in the remote rural areas where modern care systems are not available, folk healings are the means most accessible to the people. Of many forms of folk mental health care the following five are most commonly utilized: *dang-ki* healing (shamanism), *cho-chien* (drawing lots), *poo-kua* (divination), *suan-ming* (fortune-telling), and *fong-sui* (geomancy). It is reported that nearly twice as many urbanites rely on fortune-tellers as country dwellers, who rely proportionately twice as much on *dang-kis*.⁵ However, among all folk healing systems the most popular one of a religious nature is *dang-ki* healing.

Modern mental health care in Taiwan evolved in a vacuum after World War II, when Taiwan was returned to China from Japanese occupation.⁶ The first psychiatric center was established by the National Taiwan University Hospital thirty years ago, while the first professional

⁴ Francis Hsu, *Americans and Chinese* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981), p. 230.

⁵ Wu and Hu, p. 324.

⁶ T. Y. Lin, "Evolution of Mental Health Program in Taiwan," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 177 (1977): 961-71.

family counseling center was set up by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan fifteen years ago. It is not surprising to learn that fewer than 100 professionally trained psychiatrists and psychologists are presently practicing among the total population of twenty million. Due to the fact that most of the modern professionals are serving in the large cities, they are not available to the majority of the people, especially those who live in the rural areas.

In the past the general attitude of the medical profession and the public to modern mental health care was indifference, ignorance, and prejudice.⁷ Only in recent years has a positive attitude toward modern mental health professionals started to appear. Yet, the number of clients seeking their help has been comparatively much lower than those visiting folk healers. Today many people still believe that to see a folk healer is acceptable, but to see a psychiatrist or counselor indicates a serious problem. Mental illness in Taiwan shows little amenability to modern approaches. Wu and Hu's survey indicates,

⁷ Wen-Shing Tseng, "Traditional and Modern Psychiatric Care in Taiwan," in *Culture and Healing in Asian Societies*, ed. Arthur Kleinman (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1978), p. 319.

less than two percent of Taipei residents and one percent of rural Taiwanese go to modern or Western-oriented, mental health clinics or services.⁹ A recent census survey reveals that forty percent of the sample population (5,000) has manifested at least one period of mental illness (mainly minor psychiatric disorders) requiring some degree of psychiatric care. Of these 95 percent were not treated by modern mental health caregivers.⁷

In the Chinese world view the distinctions between mental and physical illness are not drawn as Westerners do. In practice the Taiwanese folk health care system diagnoses all disorders as essentially somatic, even though they may have social or emotional factors, too. We have evidence to show that this holds for modern clinical care as well. In the psychiatric clinic of the National Taiwan University Hospital, for example, 70 percent of patients with documented psychiatric disorders initially complained of somatic symptoms.¹⁰ This underlines the fact that most psychiatric care in Taiwan is

⁹ Wu and Hu, p. 324.

⁷ *The China Times* (October 15, 1983), p. 6.

¹⁰ Wen-Shing Tseng, "The Nature of Somatic Complaints Among Psychiatric Patients: The Chinese Case," *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 16 (1975): 237-45.

oriented to the treatment of somatic problems. Thus drug therapy is utilized most often.

Influenced by the combined result of folk belief, the medical system, and culture Taiwanese believe that to be effective any therapy must involve physical ingredients (like taking herbs or performing rituals). Ethnomedical studies carried out in Taiwan and in overseas Chinese communities often mention that Chinese mental patients distrust simply "talk therapy."¹¹ As a result of this negative view of talk therapy, psychiatrists in Taiwan have not utilized psychotherapy as a major and routine approach in their treatment.¹²

Today the modern mental health system is confronted with many cultural barriers causing Taiwanese people to avoid taking their problems to its services. As an old Chinese saying admonishes: "Keep your mouth shut to keep your family name good." Under such traditional influences most Taiwanese would not go outside of the family for help. Culturally speaking, the modern counselor

¹¹ Arthur Kleinman, "Depression, Somatization, and the New Cross-Cultural Psychiatry," *Social Science and Medicine* 11 (1977): 3-10.

¹² Arthur Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 95.

or psychiatrist is considered an outsider. During the present transitional period of rapid social change in Taiwan no one can be totally free from traditional cultural influences and pressures. Particularly when one's personal situation is threatened one may look for modern values intellectually, but remain in the domain of traditions emotionally. This gap and conflict between the "intellectual" and the "emotional," or between the "new concepts" and the "old patterns" have had a negative impact on the counseling profession in Taiwan. It is obvious that the more a client is subject to traditional influences, the more serious and complex are these influences as barriers to modern counseling.¹³

¹³ For further discussions of cultural influences on counseling programs in Taiwan, please see: C. A. Chien, "Social Work Practice in Taiwan: A Study of Western and Eastern Influences on Marital Counseling," (Ph.D. dissertation, Case Western Reserve University, 1983); Kaofang Yeh, "Pastoral Premarital Counseling in Taiwan: An Evaluative and Descriptive Study," (D.Min. dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1977), pp. 73-140.

PART TWO
THE CONTENT

CHAPTER 5

DANG-KI: THE HEALER

POPULARITY OF DANG-KIS

It is widely believed that shamans exist in modern time only on those edges of society where modern institutions do not meet the needs of the people. Often the poor and uneducated in rural areas will turn to primitive and informal sources of folk healing, such as shamanism. Nevertheless, as Barbara Hargrove points out, in many Asian and African countries where industrialization and modernization seem to have become the dominant pattern, shamans still remain an important part of the culture.¹ Despite recent and steady increases in the numbers of medical doctors, social workers, modern counselors, and psychiatrists *dang-kis* are not dwindling in Taiwan. It is said that probably at no time in Taiwanese history have there been so many *dang-kis* as today. Wen-Shing Tseng affirms the fact by saying that "Shamanism is one of the most important and popular healing systems available in

¹ Hargrove, p. 73.

Taiwan."² Apparently not only in the rural areas but also in the cities *dang-ki* healing plays an important role in the daily life of Taiwanese. The popularity of *dang-kis* in cities reflects the massive migration of rural populations to the urban centers of Taiwan in the last two decades.

As has been mentioned the overwhelming majority of Taiwanese do not utilize modern psychotherapy even when it is available in the metropolitan areas of Taipei and Kaoshiung. A majority of their population prefer to seek *dang-ki* healing or other forms of folk healing, though some of them may pursue both modern and folk healings simultaneously. When asked why *dang-ki* healing is still so popular among those urbanites in Taiwan, Fang Yuen Dong explains,

Basically, people are more emotional than scientific beings. Many urbanites do not trust the modern ways of healing. When the situation is needed urban dwellers may look for their solutions through customary channels.³

Yih-Yuan Li answers to the same question by saying,

² Wen-Shing Tseng, "Psychiatric Study of Shamanism in Taiwan," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 26 (1972): 561-65.

³ Personal interview with Fang-Yuen Dong, Professor of Folk Religion at Taiwan Theological College, 22 January 1986.

It is easy for people to turn back to primitive beliefs in a society where traditional cultural heritage fails to catch up with the fast pace of modernization, and new values have not been developed.... As a result, people tend to seek for help outside the logical boundary to heal their wounds.⁴

Culturally speaking the popularity of *dang-kis* is due to their healing being integrated into the Taiwanese culture, and so familiar to their clients. In other words, the Taiwanese people go to *dang-ki* shrines as Westerners go to church on Sunday. Hsu makes a similar observation,

The popularity of *dang-ki* healing indicates the great demand for such a therapy, not only because the need for psychological help is greater than modern psychotherapy can meet, but also because it better suits Taiwanese culture.⁵

There is no island-wide official data to show how many *dang-kis* now practice in Taiwan. However, in almost every folk temple (especially in villages and towns) there is at least one *dang-ki* for the client to consult. According to Li's report the total number of folk temples was

⁴ Personal interview with Professor Yih-Yuan Li, senior researcher at the Institute of Ethnology of Academia Sinica, 7 February 1986.

⁵ Jin Hsu, "Counseling in the Chinese Temple: A Psychological Study of Divination by Chien Drawing," in *Culture-Bound Syndromes, Ethnopsychiatry, and Alternate Therapies*, ed. William Lebra (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 220.

about 12,000 in 1983. Li also says, "The density of folk temples in Taiwan is now higher than Thailand due to a great revival of folk religion in Taiwan after World War II."⁶ It is believed that at least one to three *dang-kis* may be found in any village, island-wide. A report based on estimation states that there must be at the very least eight hundred actively practicing *dang-kis* in Taipei alone.⁷ Visiting a recently developed apartment community in Ban-Chiao (a vicinity of Taipei), I was astonished by the informant's report that there are about ten active *dang-kis* within the five-hundred-foot radius of that community. It is equally surprising to learn that the Taiwanese psychiatrists are in a ratio of one to one hundred and eight thousand while the *dang-kis* are in a ratio of one to three thousand in Taipei and one to one thousand in the rural areas.⁸

⁶ Personal interview with Professor Yih-Yuan Li.

⁷ Arthur Kleinman, "Medical and Psychiatric Anthropology and the Study of Traditional Forms of Medicine in Modern Chinese Culture," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica* 39 (Spring, 1975): 107-123.

⁸ *The China Times*, p. 6.

THE DANG-KI'S CANDIDATE

In theory, anyone can become a *dang-ki*. If a person is chosen by a *shen* (god) for this task there is no escape. No one can become a *dang-ki* unless he/she is selected personally, no matter how much one may desire it.⁷ Certain types of people, however, are considered more likely than others to become *dang-ki*. Informants told me that youth under the age of twenty are the most suitable candidates, and those whose personality type tends to be more excitable, more sensitive, and more introverted than the average. The informant also told me that most *dang-kis* came from lower-class families often with only an elementary education.

Most of the reports about the shaman candidates indicate that they were sick, often in bad physical condition, or exhibited strange dissociated behavior. The affected is faced with two alternatives: either become a shaman or end one's life in insanity or early death. Although there are instances in which older persons became

⁷ Alan Elliott, *Chinese Spirit Medium in Singapore* (Pasadena: Oriental Book Store, 1981), p. 46.

dang-kis and some may not show any prior symptoms, Li offers this observation,

It is believed that a *dang-ki* is one whose horoscope indicates that he is bound to die young, so serving as the medium of a spirit or god is a way to save his otherwise ill-fated life. Therefore, in the classic case, a *dang-ki* is young and had some physical or mental defect before being called by a god.¹⁰

Writing from Kun-Shan (a fishing village on the west coast of Taiwan), N. J. Diamond notes that the calling of a young man to serve as a *dang-ki* often involves his being cured from a sickness. He is then chosen by his future patron god.¹¹ Two of the *dang-kis* I interviewed reported that they discovered their "calling" during the treatment of their own illness by other *dang-kis*. In this regard, the process of *dang-ki* healing may be interpreted as the *dang-ki* symbolically manifesting his/her own healing which the client will then experience also. The process and dynamics of *dang-ki* healing is illustrated by the following Diagram 3.

¹⁰ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan," p. 179.

¹¹ N. J. Diamond, *Kun Shen: A Taiwanese Village* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. 125.

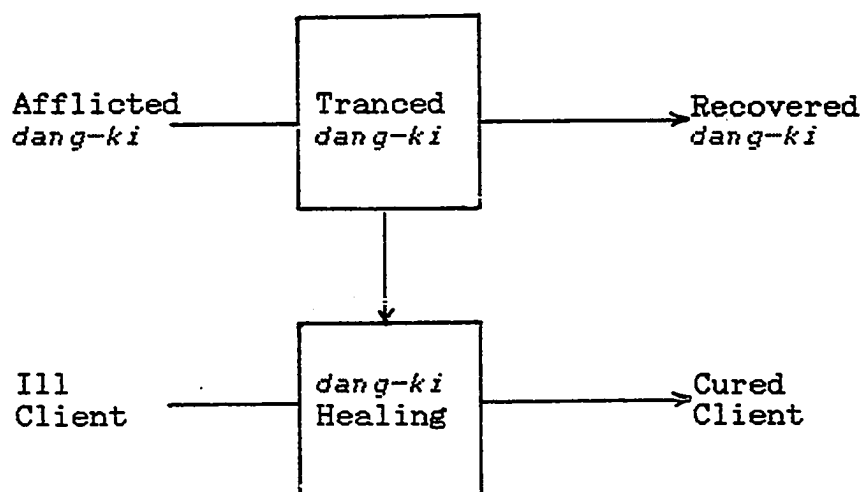


Diagram 3

Both men and women can become *dang-kis*. The term *dang-ki* is interchangeable for both male and female Taiwanese shamans. In ancient times the female shamans (*wu*) outnumbered the males. In recent times, however, most *dang-kis* have been men. Today there are other Asian countries, such as Korea and Japan, where female shamans still outnumber the males.¹² In Taiwan, however, it is estimated that about five-sixths of the *dang-kis* are now male.

¹² Hargrove, p. 71.

THE DANG-KI'S TRAINING

However selected, a *dang-ki* candidate must immediately receive training in order to develop basic skills and techniques. It is believed that *dang-kis* receive their healing power from *shens* (gods). Thus, before the *dang-ki* candidates receive public recognition of their calling, they must show certain signs of spirit possession and supernatural power. In addition to acquiring skills and techniques, each *dang-ki* candidate must have his or her own personal experience of the *shen*.

Some *dang-ki* candidates may receive self-training in which they keep themselves in the shrine hall for seven days, receiving direct instruction from gods. More *dang-ki* candidates, however, obtain formal training from older, experienced *dang-kis*. During the training period they are taught about traditional medical knowledge, how to give advice to clients, and how to perform ritual activities and mortification of the physical body. Normally the whole training period lasts from one week to thirty days. During this period, the candidate is isolated from common people and gradually reduces eating food, fasting completely in the last week. Under these conditions, some candidates may experience visual or auditory hallucinations. These

are interpreted as a sign of communication with gods and it is believed they will enhance the candidate's ability to be possessed by gods in the future.¹³ Evidently, a *dang-ki* candidate has to face the difficult ordeals in training in order to become a recognized *dang-ki*. As Gary Boetger observes, "To become a shaman took enormous courage and willingness to risk insanity and even death in the quest for the power to shamanize."¹⁴ In the history of Taiwanese shamanism there must have been some *dang-ki* candidates who could not go through the thrilling and dangerous training and end their lives in tragedies.

When the training is successfully completed, public initiation is needed for a candidate to become a recognized *dang-ki*. In the initiation ceremony the new *dang-ki* is expected to perform mortification demonstrating that he/she will not be seriously injured by executing dangerous acts: cutting oneself with swords, piercing the cheeks with iron rods, sitting on a bed of nails, walking over coals of fire, climbing up sword ladders, holding boiling oil in the mouth, etc. Mortification of the flesh

¹³ Wen-Shing Tseng, "Psychiatric Study of Shamanism in Taiwan," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 26 (1972): 561-65.

¹⁴ Gary Boetger, *In Search of Balance* (Roslyn Heights, NY: Libra Publishers Inc., 1976), p. 37.

is the *dang-ki's* sign to the community that he/she is real and has supernatural power. In theory a *dang-ki* mortifies his/her body each time he/she is tranced. In practice, mortification is more frequently performed at communal festivals than in private healing.

It is interesting to note that there is a clear contradiction between the *dang-ki's* self mortification and the Chinese filial virtue of well preserving one's body as the beginning of filial piety. In this filial context *dang-ki's* mortification is a powerful sign of the lack of such piety. This indicates that while the *dang-ki* is in trance his/her own personality ceases to exist and he/she becomes the instrument of the god. It suggests that the tranced *dang-ki* is being cut off from the responsibilities of ordinary mortals.¹⁵ In the training period and the entrancing stage suffering is always an essential and powerful matter in *dang-ki* healing. A *dang-ki* bears suffering so he/she can heal the sufferer--*dang-ki* is a wounded healer.

¹⁵ Jordan, p. 84.

THE DANG-KI'S MENTAL HEALTH

Shamans often used to be described as mentally ill. As Hargrove says, the role of a shaman comes very close to our description of a schizoid or schizophrenic personality.¹⁶ Joachim Wach hints that in many primitive societies any emotionally unstable person is likely to be "honored" as a shaman.¹⁷ Anthony Wallace adds that the role of a shaman provides a functional spot for personality types our society often shunts off into custodial institutions.¹⁸ There are certain cases linking the shamanic initiation with mental illness, but it is not true for all such cases. Eliade is firmly against the view of linking all shamanic initiations with mental disorders. He says,

It is not correct to say that shamans are, or must always be, neuropaths; on the contrary, a great many of them are perfectly sound in mind. Moreover, those who had previously been ill have become shamans just because they succeeded in

¹⁶ Hargrove, p. 72.

¹⁷ Joachim Wach, *The Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), pp. 334-36.

¹⁸ Anthony Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), pp. 150-52.

getting well.... The initiation is manifested by--among other things--a new psychic integration.¹⁹

Similarly, Radin asserts that "often when the shaman's vocation is revealed through an illness or an epileptoid attack, the initiation of the candidate is equivalent to a cure."²⁰ The following statements may represent the general positive aspect of the shaman's mental health which has been observed by scholars:

No shaman is, in everyday life, an abnormal individual, a neurotic or paranoiac; if he were, he would be classed as a lunatic, not respected as a priest. Nor finally can shamanism be correlated with incipient or latent abnormality; I recorded no case of a shaman whose professional hypteria deteriorated into mental disorders.²¹

Specifically, positive descriptions of the shaman's mental health in various cultures and societies are cited by Eliade. I quote just a few as follows:²²

In general, the Siberian and North Asian shamans show no sign of mental disintegration. Their memory and their power of self-control are distinctly above the average. Their astonishing capacity to control even ecstatic movements testifies to an excellent nervous constitution.

¹⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 77.

²⁰ Paul Radin, *Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin* (New York: Orbis Books, 1957), pp. 65-66.

²¹ McKenna and McKenna, p. 13.

²² Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp. 30-32.

Among the Samoyed, the Ostyak, and certain other tribes, the shaman is usually healthy and that, intellectually, he is often above his milieu.

No physical or physiological or peculiarity seems to have been selected as the symptom of a special predisposition for the practice of Amazonian shamans.

Among the Wintu of California the transmission and perfecting of speculative thought are in the hands of the shaman.

The shamans in Australia are expected to be, and usually are, perfectly healthy and normal.

Reports have been made regarding the mental health of the Chinese shaman which concur with the above statements. According to a Chinese text,

The shaman (*wu*) is a person upon whom a Bright Spirit has descended, attracted to him because he is particularly vigorous and lively, staunch in adherence to principle, reverent and just; so wise that in all matters high and low he always takes the right side, so saintly that he spreads around him a radiance that reaches far and wide.²³

A report based on in-depth personal interview and psychiatric evaluations of the *dang-kis* indicates that none of the sample *dang-kis* exhibited any evidence of significant psychopathology nor gave any history of major

²³ This is of course an idealized picture, perhaps intended to apply only to the *wu* of a Golden Age in ancient China. See Yuan, pp. 9-10.

psychiatric problems. The reporter states,

Most *dang-kis* were rather remarkable individuals, who possessed strong personalities and many adaptive coping skills. They were adept at quickly assessing and managing life crises and personal difficulties, were as effective at interpersonal communication as at ritual manipulations, and were recognized as such by neighbors and clients. *dang-ki* healing clearly demands personal strengths and sensitivities incompatible with major psychopathology, especially chronic psychosis.²⁴

Another study of *dang-kis* shows that to become a *dang-ki* always fulfills the individual's psychological needs and solves his/her personal problems, such as feeling insecure or inferior. However, the researcher notes that successful *dang-kis*, those who could help their clients were always perceptive, sensible, and mature persons.²⁵ All the *dang-kis* I observed and interviewed seemed to be sincere and likable persons who were rather upright in character.

²⁴ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 214.

²⁵ W. S. Tseng and John McDermott, *Culture, Mind and Therapy: An Introduction to Cultural Psychiatry* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1981), p. 241.

THE PROFESSIONAL DANG-KI

Traditionally, a *dang-ki* must not perform healing for material gain. The *dang-ki* does not charge a fee, but the client customarily donates money and/or a gift to the *dang-ki* for the god. In fact, it may be extremely bad manners even to mention the matter of money. In most *dang-ki* shrines that I visited there is an offering box (usually made of glass or transparent plastic) placed next to the altar. At the end of each *dang-ki's* service, the client voluntarily drops the money (sometimes the money is put in a red envelope) into the offering box. On only two occasions I saw the money handed directly to a *dang-ki* or an assistant.

The status and income of the *dang-ki* varies. Many serve only part time in their healing. These *dang-kis* usually hold a regular job during the day and provide healing at night. Generally speaking, unlike most urban *dang-kis*, rural *dang-kis* earn their living from other kinds of work, such as farming or carpentry, and they do not earn large amounts of money from their services.²⁶ Some *dang-kis*

²⁶ Ibid., p. 217.

have many clients and earn a good living; others have few clients and live on a lower income.

During the last two decades, however, *dang-ki* healing has become even more popular in Taiwan, and several different kinds of practice have developed. One of these is the professional *dang-ki*, who practices full-time and opens a "clinic" at his/her private shrine or in a temple.²⁷ Several *dang-kis* I met work full time and even hold regular service hours very much like modern counselors serving in a counseling center. They are recognized as professionals by their clients. One *dang-ki* client remarked that she pays the same respect to a *dang-ki* and a medical doctor. Today, some *dang-kis* are professionally established. Some are able to manage their busy schedules in practicing both in rural and urban areas. An informant described a famous urban *dang-ki* whom he related to by saying, "Almost every night you will see ten to fifteen clients come to the *dang-ki* shrine for healing."

Among the *dang-kis* I visited, two of them even posted a sign listing what services they specialize in and the corresponding fees they charge. Needless to say, there

²⁷ Li, p. 181.

are additional charges for burning incense, extra charms, and special healing rituals. Visits to those professional *dang-kis* vary considerably in cost from five to twenty-five dollars just for the regular consultation.²⁸ At the same time, when a client sees a modern professional counselor, he/she may pay only from three to ten dollars. It must be noted that until today many services provided by professional counselors are free of charge.

²⁸ U.S. dollar equivalents used. The exchange rate is about NT \$40 = US \$1.

CHAPTER 6

THE CLINICAL DESCRIPTION OF DANG-KI HEALING

THE DANG-KI'S CLIENT

In Taiwan all age groups of both sexes utilize *dang-ki* healing, regardless of whether or not they are educated. The majority of *dang-ki* clients are women from the low-middle and lower classes.¹ Although men do not actively participate in the healing sessions, they often accompany their mothers or wives to the *dang-ki* shrines. Observing twenty-four sessions of *dang-ki* healing, I counted only six male clients. Among those female clients thirteen were middle-aged and older, and five were young women. This proportion is not unusual, since in traditional folk religion women were ritually more active than men. Moreover, within the family the senior female member is usually in charge of ritual matters, and hence it is

¹ For modern practitioners the terms "client" and "patient" may be used interchangeably. In Taiwan, however, the Chinese-style and Western-style doctors use the term "patient" (*ben-lan*); the folk practitioners use the term "client" (*lan-ke*), literally, "guest." Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 221.

she who visits the *dang-ki* on behalf of her family.²

In rural areas a *dang-ki* is available to the local people within walking distance. Most *dang-ki* clients visit the shrine in their home community. However, there is a tendency for the Taiwanese people to consider those *dang-kis* "powerful" who are "far away," particularly those who practice in famous temples to which pilgrimages are regularly made or those whose festivals are renowned.³ Since clients will travel a great distance to see a *dang-ki* who is known to be powerful and effective, it is common for clients of the city *dang-kis* to come from rural areas and vice versa.

I was constantly amazed by the rich variety of the problems presented by clients. In rural areas people come to the *dang-ki* to ask for help in finding lost items, curing sick people and animals, naming their new born child, changing a family's economic fortune or *fong-sui* (geomancy), settling quarrels with relatives or friends, and solving the problem of infertility of wives and

² The similar phenomenon is also observed in Japan. William Lebra, "Shaman and Client in Okinawa," in *Culture and Mental Health Research in Asia and Pacific*, ed. William Lebra (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1974), p. 217.

³ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 217.

animals.⁴ Although the *dang-ki* tends to be viewed by the general public as having multiple functions, the chief one is actually healing. An analysis of problems presented to *dang-kis* indicates that half to three-quarters are health matters while more than one-fifth are psychiatric in nature.⁵ The survey shows the general pattern of the clients' choice of treatment: They go to modern physicians for the cure of potentially life-threatening disease, and to *dang-kis* for personally and culturally meaningful treatment of illness.⁶ A survey of the problems presented to 122 *dang-ki* by new clients reveals the following:

54 (45%) came seeking treatment for sickness (self limited and somatization);

32 (27%) came to have their fate determined and bad fate treated;

24 (19%) came because of business or other financial problems; and

11 (9%) came with questions concerning interpersonal problems.⁷

Occasionally, a person who suffers from a hys-

⁴ Margery Wolf, *Women and the Family in Rural Taiwan* (Standord University Press, 1972), pp. 149-50.

⁵ Tseng, "Psychiatric Study of Shamanism in Taiwan," pp. 561-65.

⁶ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 362.

⁷ Ibid., p. 318.

terical neurosis in the form of a dissociative state or mild acute psychosis may be brought to a *dang-ki's* shrine for treatment.⁹ In general however, *dang-kis* will not treat violent psychotic behavior or chronic psychotic disorders. Nor will they treat acute trauma or other serious, acute health problems that potentially might even-tuate in death.⁷ Kleinman acknowledges that and makes an interesting observation:

They (the *dang-kis*) learn to extricate themselves from these situations without damaging the popular ideology that the gods (the *dang-kis*) are powerful healers. They do this in a number of ways, the simplest of which is to define an illness as from "within the body," rather than from "god, ghost, or ancestors," and therefore outside the boundaries of sacred healing.... If *dang-kis* do treat these problems, they also refer clients for appropriate medical attention.¹⁰

THE DANG-KI'S SETTING

In Taiwan a *dang-ki* is usually attached to a temple. Some *dang-kis* may be attached to several temples at the same time. Other *dang-kis* go to public temples to

⁹ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 215.

⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

be possessed and answer petitioners problems, but they are not ^{even} actually attached to these temples.¹¹ In any case, *dang-ki* is essentially associated with temple worship. It is virtually impossible for a *dang-ki* to practice without the use of a temple premises.¹² However, in a special case *dang-ki* healing may be conducted in the client's home provided there is a statue of the temple/shrine god.¹³

Most self-owned, family type *dang-ki* shrines are small and similar. Normally, the shrine has one large hall which can hold about ten to twenty people. Against the back wall is an altar on which dozens of statues of *shens* (gods) are placed. In the center and highest spot on the altar the statue of the shrine's chief god is placed. In most shrines I visited the healing hall (ritual hall) takes up about two-thirds of the main hall with an area of less than twenty-five feet square. The rest of the main hall is either a big stand where incense and paper money are put or a small herbal shop where traditional herbs are sold. Occasionally, a sign is hung on the wall in the corner of the hall, listing the fees

¹¹ Jordan, *God, Ghosts, and Ancestors*, p. 68.

¹² Alan Elliott, p. 44.

¹³ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan," p. 180.

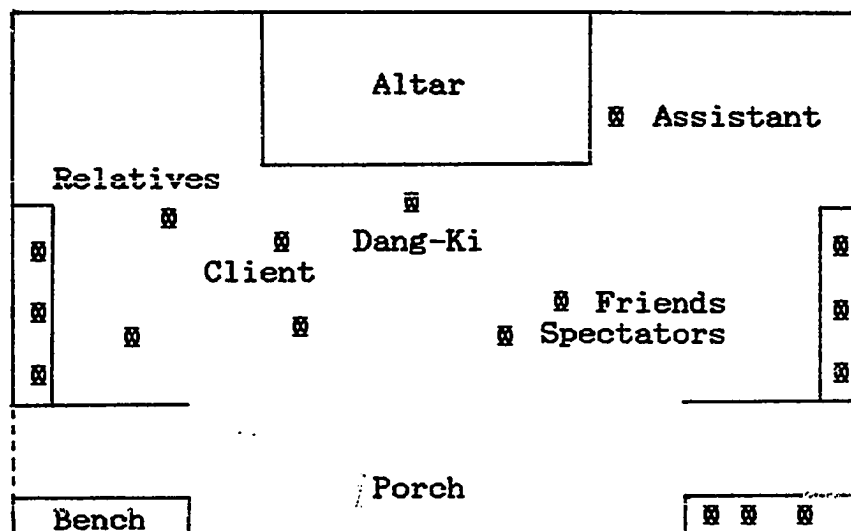
and the *dang-ki's* specialty of treatment. The usual access to the main hall is through a large wide door at the front.

Along one entire side the shrine opens to the main street. Outside the main hall is a covered porch with benches along the sides. The porch is used as a socializing area and a pedestrian walkway. Indeed, at *dang-ki* shrines there is much socializing among the people inside and outside the main hall when the shrine is opened. (A diagram of a *dang-ki* shrine can be found in Diagram 4 on page 68.)

In Taiwan, family members and friends customarily accompany the client to consult a *dang-ki*. *Dang-ki* healing is always held in public. More participants are involved in the healing than simply the client and the *dang-ki*. Also included are the client's family members and close friends, the *dang-ki's* assistants, and the spectators. Since *dang-ki* healing proceeds in public, public commentary and participation may be acceptable. While I was recording the *dang-ki* consultation in one healing session, I cut in twice and offered clarification and advice to the client. On both occasions I was too excited by the interactions to refrain from participating. Another interesting observation was made that *dang-ki's* often conducted their healing in rather noisy surroundings, yet

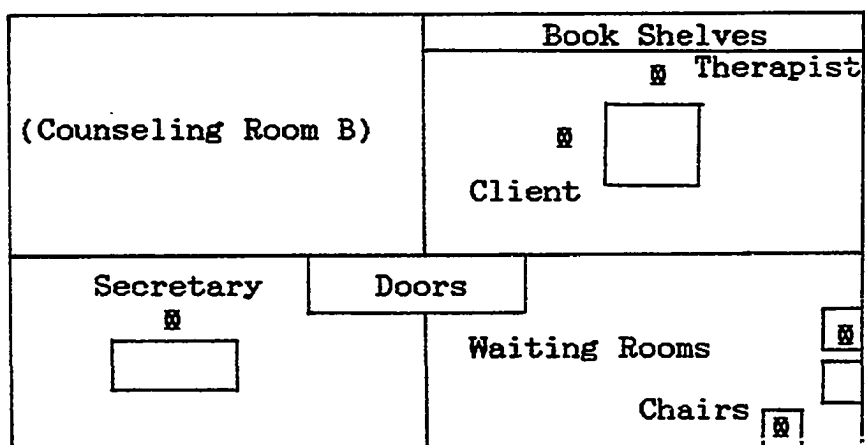
they did not seem to be bothered by it at all. In several *dang-ki* sessions that I recorded, I noticed various noises in the background, including the engine sounds from the passing cars and motorcycles, teasing and shouting among the children playing in the doorway, a cracking noise from fire crackers, and the excited comments from participants other than the *dang-ki* and the client.

Finally, being aware that a fundamental premise of modern counseling is the need for confidentiality, I am very interested in comparing the significant difference between the setting of a *dang-ki* shrine and that of a counseling center. Diagrams 4 and 5 indicate the contrast between the public nature of the *dang-ki* shrine and the privacy of a modern counseling office.



(A Dang-Ki Shrine)

Diagram 4



(A Counseling Center)

Diagram 5

THE DANG-KI'S ASSISTANT

Dang-kis and their assistants are interdependent and work together very well. The success of *dang-ki* healing depends greatly upon the competence of the assistant. In some shrines the assistants were family members, spouse or a brother of the *dang-ki*. The general duties of the *dang-ki's* assistant are: registering clients, providing clients with incense and paper money for worshipping the gods, preparing charms and amulets, writing down and packing (if an herbal shop is in the shrine) the herb drugs prescribed, giving supplemental advice and comments, collecting money and gifts, and taking care of the shrine.

Other than these general duties the assistant has another, more essential role: translating the *dang-ki's* messages and helping the *dang-ki* to enter and to end a trance. Usually, the *dang-ki* speaks a kind of language that is foreign to the client. It is the assistant who translates the *dang-ki's* verbal treatment, regarded by the client as the most important part of the healing process. In one healing that I observed, the *dang-ki* even used a *shen-yi* (god's chair), a small sacred chair swung by two *dang-kis* to write the god's instructions on the altar table. There the assistant stood by the table translating

the messages, and there the essential role of the assistant most dramatically appeared. In the healing process, without the assistants the *dang-kis* would not know how to lead themselves into a trance and would risk being overpowered by gods or over-exerting themselves. Nor would the *dang-kis* know how to end the trance and be restored to a normal state of consciousness.¹⁴

Finally, it needs to be stressed that while translating for the *dang-kis* and helping them in and out of a trance are the prime responsibilities of the assistants, they often provide the clients with some form of "counseling." In the whole process of *dang-ki* healing, the assistants always play an important role in caring and supporting the client before and after the formal *dang-ki* consultation. The caring and supporting functions of the *dang-ki's* assistants are clear when they provide additional advice, encouragement, and assurance for the clients and their family members. Frequently, an assistant affirms the positive outcome of the *dang-ki* healing by saying to the client: "You will be healed!" or "You have no problem now!"

¹⁴ Ming-Chung Chiu, p. 265.

THE DANG-KI'S TRANCE

When clients first enter the shrine hall they register with the *dang-ki's* assistant. They give their name, address, birthday, which is called *ba-tze* (the eight-characters). Each client then burns incense and prays to the shrine's gods, often to the chief god. Some clients throw divination blocks to secure the god's consent for the healing. After conducting preliminary rituals the client then waits for the *dang-ki* to enter into a tranced state in order to start the formal treatment. It is generally agreed that the tranced behavior is what is most drastical about *dang-ki* healing. Only rarely a *dang-ki* gives direct advice to a client without entering into trance.

A *dang-ki* is a religious practitioner who heals on behalf of a god (or as if he/she were a god). Sometimes *dang-kis* may refer to themselves as god's intermediaries or god's children. In trance the god takes possession of the *dang-ki's* body and provides healing for the worshippers. Although theoretically the *dang-ki* could be possessed by as many gods as worshipped in the, shrine he/she is always possessed by only one god at a time.

According to many reports the phenomenon of the

shaman in a trance is very similar worldwide. Different shamans may show slight differences in their trance behavior, but most conform to a general pattern. In Taiwan most *dang-kis* do not put on special garments in healing and their only costume is a piece of red ritual cloth wrapped around their chest. It is believed that the red color is a symbol for a benevolent god and can drive away evil spirits. When *dang-kis* are ready to be in trance, they sit and pray quietly in front of or at the side of the altar table. Although they all seem to be relaxed as they wait to be possessed, their tense expectation is perceivable. The client and the people gathered also wait anxiously and solemnly. Suddenly, the relaxed posture of the *dang-ki* is replaced by small shaking movements in the *dang-ki's* muscles (especially in the head and limbs). Gradually, the movements grow stronger and stronger until there is a violent trembling and shaking over the whole body. The *dang-ki* now utters some indistinct sounds and performs some dramatic gestures indicating a god is in possession of the *dang-ki*. Li also vividly describes this trancing episode as follows:

Before a *dang-ki* becomes possessed his body becomes cold. The first overt sign that he is being affected is that he stretches and yawns several times; later there is a gentle quivering of the limbs. When the quivering becomes stronger, the *dang-ki's* whole body starts to sway and his head begins to swing around in circles. He

suddenly jumps up and for a few minutes leaps about, portraying the characteristics that are expected of him.¹⁵

Although the process of the *dang-ki's* trance is usually noticeable, sometimes a *dang-ki* may enter a trance quickly without many dramatic movements. In one shrine I observed the *dang-ki* who was possessed immediately after lighting a joss stick to worship the gods. In either case the *dang-ki* is believed to have a new identity, becoming a "god" and acting like the possessing god.¹⁶ The tranced *dang-ki* will then claim by which god he/she is possessed and ask why the god is called. The most dramatic part of *dang-ki* healing now proceeds.

When the *dang-ki* finishes healing, he/she will return to a normal state with the help from the assistant (often by patting the *dang-ki's* back or sprinkling water over the *dang-ki's* head). One *dang-ki* described his experience of coming out of the trance as if he were awakened from a sound sleep without any dream (that is, he did not remember anything that had happened in his tranced

¹⁵ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan," p. 180.

¹⁶ At this point, it is interesting to compare the *dang-ki's* trance with the techniques of hypnosis used by modern psychotherapists. In *dang-ki's* trance the healer is self "hypnotized," while in psychotherapy the client is put into "trance" by the therapist.

state). Although a few *dang-kis* may admit to remembering what happened when they were in trance, most *dang-kis* never remember anything after returning from the trance.¹⁷ My observation conforms to Norms Diamond's that no *dang-kis* remember what happened while they were in the trance.¹⁸

A shamanic practice is very fatiguing. The shamanic trance is a powerful and painful experience, which may be described as a process of going through "death and rebirth." Most *dang-kis* stated that they felt physically exhausted after coming out of the trance. It is almost impossible to imagine how exhausting it would be for the *dang-ki* who may remain constantly tranced over three to five hours in one busy evening.

However, I found that older, more experienced and well-established *dang-kis* referred to the trance or possession less frequently than did the younger, less experienced ones. One of the older *dang-kis* with whom I had several contacts expressed some reservation about his trance in every healing session. He explained that it would be too much in terms of time and energy consumed to be in trance for every client since there are about twenty

¹⁷ Jordan, p. 76

¹⁸ Diamond, p. 125.

clients in his shrine every day. It seems to me that the *dang-ki* implied that sometimes he would help a client without being in trance or act as if he were in trance to satisfy the client's expectation. Nevertheless the inconsistency of the tranced state was further rationalized by the *dang-ki*, who said, "I know what my clients want and to be able to help them is the whole business!"

THE DANG-KI'S TREATMENT

Though the specific techniques of *dang-kis* may differ individually, there are underlying procedures common to all *dang-ki* healings. In most cases, the formal part of *dang-ki* healing includes four essential procedures. They are:

1. Entering into trance (discussed above),
2. Identifying the problem,
3. Explaining the causes of the problem, and
4. Providing treatments.

In some occasions a tranced *dang-ki* may engage in dramatic mortification before offering formal consultation. In consultation, however, the behavior of many *dang-kis* is much less dramatic. They do not perform any elaborate or impressive rituals. Their voice are low and flat and some may even speak the dialect which the client

can understand without the assistant's interpretation.

When a client is given permission to consult the tranced *dang-ki*, he/she is asked first to present the major problem to the *dang-ki*. Immediately following that the *dang-ki's* next work is to identify and to explain the nature and the cause of the client's problem. In this procedure the *dang-ki* helps the client and the client's relatives and and/or friends to understand that illness or problems are explicable in terms of the concept and beliefs in the culture. The therapeutic value of this explanation of naming is very significant, since it brings the client from the terrifying unknown to the more assuring known: to give a name to a condition is the first step toward controlling it.¹⁹ In *dang-ki* healing the most common explanations of the causes of the client's problems given by *dang-kis* are: *pai-ming* (bad fate), *pai-fong-sui* (bad geomancy), ancestors' spirits and ghosts.

Immediately after identifying the problem and explaining the cause of it, the *dang-ki* provides various treatments. They include:

¹⁹ Spencer Rogers, *The Shaman: His Symbols and His Healing Power* (Springfield, IL: Thomas Books, 1982), p. 140.

1. Performing rituals,
2. Writing charms,
3. Carrying divination,
4. Giving verbal advice, and
5. Utilizing traditional healing techniques.

Each *dang-ki* may specialize in certain rituals in treating particular kinds of problems, such as child fright, personal bad fate, or family discord. Usually *dang-kis* will perform only simple and short rituals in their shrines to treat problems considered to be common ones. They last from a few minutes to less than an hour. More often the *dang-ki* uses a hand brush with red ink to write a charm on paper. Sometimes, a *dang-ki* will hold a brush pen and/or three burning incense sticks in his/her hand, making movements along the client's body to write a major but invisible charm. Occasionally a tranced *dang-ki* may even inflict wounds on his/her head, tongue, or back to obtain blood in order to write charms in red. After writing the charms the *dang-ki* tells the client where to place them. Often clients are directed to stick the charm(s) on top of the door(s) in their houses, to carry it wherever their client goes, or to burn it and drink its ashes mixed with water. The major effect expected from the charm is to protect clients from being harmed by the ghosts or to drive them away. Along with

writing charms and performing rituals the *dang-ki* may also order the client to observe some taboo, or occasionally to suggest a *fong-sui* (geomancy) be changed or to proceed with a spirit marriage.

The shaman's healing methods basically are religious (or supernatural). *Dang-kis* or their assistants may also utilize various Taiwanese healing techniques such as herbs, dietary, massage, bone setting, or acupressure. Some *dang-kis* indicated that they would refer their clients with severe or critical physical illness to modern physicians.

In the whole procedure of treatment only very few *dang-kis* perform no ritual at all but simply dialogue with the clients. However, one of the highlights of *dang-ki* healing is when the possessing god talks through the *dang-ki*, communicating to the client in a folk form of counseling or talk therapy. One often used channel for conducting *dang-kis* talk therapy is divination or *chien* interpretation. *Chien* interpretation is important not only in *dang-ki* healing but also it is a very popular instrument effectively used in many other folk healings. In almost every temple or shrine in Taiwan there is a bamboo pipe or wood box filled with numbered bamboo sticks and placed by the altar. A temple worshipper may randomly pick a bamboo stick and then get a sacred slip of paper *chien* according

to the number shown on the stick. On each *chien* there is written an old poem or proverb, providing hidden answers to various problems or concerns. The *chien* interpreter then offers an appropriate interpretation and additional advice accordingly.²⁰

The *dang-ki's* treatments differ in a number of ways. Some spend more time communicating with clients, while others spend more time performing elaborate rituals.²¹ Generally speaking, however, *dang-ki* healing may be regarded as an ultra short-term therapy in which the healer-client relationship is episodic and rarely continuous for a longer term. It was unusual when an experienced *dang-ki* indicated that recently one of his clients returned to his shrine ten times over a period of two months.

In terms of the amount of time used for each healing session, one interesting study compares *dang-ki* with Chinese and Western style doctors in Taiwan. The

²⁰ For more details about *chien* interpretation please see Jin Hsu; Arthur Kleinman, "Comparisons of Practitioner Patient Interactions in Taiwan," in *Culture and Healing in Asian Societies*, ed. Arthur Kleinman (Cambridge: Schenkman, Publishing Co., 1978); and Tseng, "Traditional and Modern Psychiatric Care in Taiwan".

²¹ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 233.

result of the study indicates that *dang-kis* not only spend more time with each client but also spend a much greater proportion of that time explaining the illness and treatment to their clients.²² Specifically, it is calculated that Western-oriented physicians spend an average of less than one minute with each patient, traditional Chinese physicians one to three minutes, and *dang-kis* up to an hour.²³ Finally, it should be noted that after the time spent in consulting with the tranced *dang-ki* which ranges from a few minutes to an hour, very often the clients remain in the shrine for another hour or two. Some of them may sit in the main hall meditating, praying, or resting. Others may receive further help and instructions from the assistant. Almost all of the *dang-ki's* clients will spend a lengthy time in the shrine socializing or sharing their problems with other clients, family members, or even spectators.

²² Kleinman, "The Failure of Western Medicine," *Human Nature* 47 (November 1978): 63-68.

²³ Kleinman, "Medical and Psychiatric Anthropology," pp. 117-23.

CHAPTER 7

PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC ANALYSIS OF DANG-KI HEALING

DANG-KI HEALING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

The terms counseling and psychotherapy have been used to denote a wide range of helping professions.¹ A few of the definitions of counseling/psychotherapy contained in the literature are given as follows:

Counseling is a relationship in which one person endeavors to help another to understand and to solve his adjustment problems.²

Counseling is a process involving interpersonal relationships between a therapist and one or more clients by which the former employs psychological methods based on systematic knowledge of the human personality in attempting to improve the mental health of the latter.³

Psychotherapy consists of modes of intervention that (1) involve differential and asymmetrical roles of at least two individuals, one distressed and the other allegedly equipped with

¹ In this study the terms "psychotherapy" and "counseling" are used interchangeably.

² H. B. English and A. C. English, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1958), p. 127.

³ C. Patterson, *Counseling and Psychotherapy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 13.

expertise to remove or alleviate such distress; (2) by means of techniques that are principally verbal, interpersonal and psychological in nature; and (3) with the general objectives of bringing about relief, reorganization of adaptive resources, and personality change.⁴

Counseling is an intervention process which facilitates a meaningful understanding of one's self and environment and results in the establishment and/or clarification of goals and values for future behavior.⁵

In a narrower sense, the above definitions imply that psychotherapy is only a Western-modern phenomenon. However, in a broader sense, psychotherapy should be defined as a culturally prescribed way of human problem-solving. If we think of counseling in larger dimensions of seeking the advice of men and women made wise by virtue of long experience, or of availing oneself of the aid of those who evidence supernatural wisdom and power, counseling is as old as mankind and as pervasive as human society.⁶ In other words, we should acknowledge that in other times and other cultures, the functions of counseling or

⁴ J. G. Draguns and L. Phillips, *Culture and Psychotherapy: The Quest for a Relationship* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1972), p. 176.

⁵ Donald H. Blocher, *Developmental Counseling* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1966), p. 5.

⁶ David Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Theory and Practice for Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 59.

psychotherapy have been served by priests, medicine men, shamans, and a variety of other folk healers. In this study I have no new definition of counseling/psychotherapy except to adapt Torrey's cross-cultural definition which seems the most adequate and is referred to throughout this thesis. From the perspective of transcultural psychiatry, Torrey states,

Psychotherapy, the treatment of problems of mental health, can be defined as a series of contacts between a socially (culturally or religiously) sanctioned healer and a patient (client) who seeks relief.... The contact may be private or public, as part of an individual or a group setting. The purpose of the contact is to provide relief for the patient.⁷

As defined here, psychotherapy is certainly not peculiar to Western needs. A rich literature is available on the subject of folk counseling/psychotherapy, which H. Collomb calls "psychiatry (counseling) without psychiatrists (counselors)."⁸ To me, the most significant part of Torrey's definition lies in his statement of "... a

⁷ E. Fuller Torrey, *The Mind Game: Witchdoctors and Psychiatrists* (New York: Emerson Hall Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 2.

⁸ Juris G. Draguns, "Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy: History, Issues, and Current Status," in *Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy* eds. Paul Pedersen and Anthony Marsella (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 4.

series of contacts between a socially (culturally or religiously) sanctioned healer and a patient (client)..." Although not "culturally sanctioned" by society as a whole, *dang-kis* are sanctioned by the masses who utilize their services. It is in this regard that *dang-kis* can be considered folk psychotherapists.

A significant difference between *dang-ki* healing and modern psychotherapy is that *dang-kis* are more directive and do more of the "work" than do modern psychotherapists who aim at helping their clients to do more of the "work." Different forms of psychotherapy (in which *dang-ki* healing is a folk form) seem to contain some universal therapeutic components and work for a wide variety of clients. At first glance, the practice of *dang-ki* healing and of modern psychotherapy may seem to be very different and even unrelated. However, if we follow Torrey's definition of psychotherapy we will find that there are certain common psychotherapeutic elements between the two. F. Capra notes that "Among various forms of folk healing, the phenomenon of shamanism offers a good number of parallels to modern psychotherapies."⁷ In comparison of folk

⁷ Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Points: Science, Society, and The Rising Culture* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 306.

therapy such as *dang-ki* healing and modern psychotherapy, Tseng emphasizes the following commonalities:

1. There is a healer and a sufferer and a process of psychological interaction between them.
2. The healer always interprets the cause of the problems for the client, whether it be interference by supernatural powers, incompatibility with nature's principles, the physical predisposition of the client, or intrapsychic conflicts.
3. The healer always prescribes something that the client should do in order to cope with the problems: perform a magic ceremony or a ritual, change client's environment, reorient relations with others, or change client's value system about oneself and the world.¹⁰

The effects of *dang-ki* healing are most quickly evident in the client's physical renewal. However, the restoration of the client's emotional and interpersonal problems are also obtained, showing that it has the effectiveness of psychotherapy. Thus, *dang-ki* healing is not merely dependent on the use of religious ceremonies or mystical rituals. They may also possess some knowledge of traditional herbs, bone setting, massage, and acupressure. In addition to these functions the *dang-ki*'s primary

¹⁰ Wen-Shing Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," in *Culture-Bound Syndromes, Ethnopsychiatry, and Alternate Therapies*, ed. William Lebra (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 174.

treatment is basically psychotherapeutic--a psychotherapy derived from the age-long perceptions and experiences. As has been shown (from the reports and my field study), the *dang-ki* can cure illnesses of a psychological or psychosomatic nature.

Generally speaking, the *dang-ki's* methods follow a psychosomatic approach by applying psychotherapeutic techniques when dealing with physical illness. Having observed *dang-ki* healing in my field study, I concur with Spencer Rogers' summary that during the course of *dang-ki* healing, psychotherapeutic techniques of catharsis, relaxation, suggestion, transference, and persuasion may also be applied in varying combinations.¹¹

From a clinical perspective we can say that the *dang-ki* functions as a traditional crisis intervention expert who is skillful in dealing with clients facing serious and acute problems. Kleinman observes the interventional effects of *dang-ki* healing in Taiwan and reports that,

Those profoundly depressed clients (of the *dang-ki*) look so much better when they left the shrine that I could not recall any case that I had treated or observed treated which had such a noticeable and immediate effect.¹²

¹¹ Rogers, *The Shaman: His Symbols*, p. 139.

¹² Kleinman, ed., *Culture and Healing in Asian Societies* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publications, 1978), p. 339.

Basically, the methods of *dang-ki* healing involve faith healing, physical therapy, group dynamics, and psychotherapeutic techniques.. In viewing the *dang-ki's* techniques, we can appreciate that the methods although often bizarre and peculiar to us, can often deal effectively with illness in ways analogous to those used by modern psychotherapists. Some of the *dang-ki's* devices may suggest techniques that the modern psychotherapist has barely begun to explore.¹³

WHY DANG-KIS SUCCESSFULLY HEAL?

For Torrey, there are four universal components of all effective psychotherapy, whether it is practiced by a witchdoctor or a psychiatrist. They are:

1. A shared worldview;
2. The personal qualities of the therapist;
3. The client's expectation of being helped;
4. Skillful therapeutic techniques.¹⁴

Based on above discussions the fact that *dang-ki*

¹³ Rogers, *The Shaman: His Symbols*, p. 132.

¹⁴ Torrey, pp. 13-82.

healing parallels psychotherapy is very clear and in most cases *dang-ki*s heal successfully. This conclusion raises research questions which will be specifically addressed in this chapter: what psychotherapeutic components in *dang-ki* healing reflect Torrey's "universal components"? What exclusive psychotherapeutic factors in *dang-ki* healing contribute to its success?

The Universal Factors

A Shared Worldview. The first universal component of effective psychotherapy suggested by Torrey is a shared worldview. Galanti states that,

A shared worldview is essential to the understanding of the cause and cure of an illness. This shared ethos makes possible the process of "naming" the use of words as symbols for what is wrong. The therapeutic implication is that if the therapist can recognize and name a problem, then he can probably effect its cure.¹⁵

In other words, language used in psychotherapy is very important for it is part of appropriate naming. However, to communicate within the shared worldview is as important as the language itself. It is the nature of a shared worldview that will govern the way in which both

¹⁵ Galanti, p. 53.

therapists and clients approach the therapeutic situation.¹⁶ An effective therapist assists clients to interpret their problems and illness in terms of the client's worldview. From a clinical aspect a shared worldview between the therapist and the client is essential to effective psychotherapy. It provides the common ground, context, and reference for the therapist to be able to effectively identify, diagnose, and treat the client's problems.

Worldview is the center of culture. Robert Redfield simply defines worldview as "The way we see ourselves in relation to all else."¹⁷ As it has been pointed out, the worldview in *dang-ki* healing is made out of the cultural, religious, and medical beliefs and ideologies of the Taiwanese masses. To a great extent this worldview is different from the modern view of reality. This is why the modern practitioner in Taiwan usually speaks an abstract language and holds a worldview often alien to the clients. In contrast, *dang-kis* and their clients share the same religious-cultural-medical views of the world and

¹⁶ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, p. 156.

¹⁷ Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 85-86.

illness. They have the common knowledge and belief of persons, nature, and of what can heal or restore the harmony and wholeness. Apparently, the success of *dang-ki* healing lies more in the shared worldview than in its use of certain language and techniques. The issue of a shared worldview is particularly important in the practice of *dang-ki* healing. This may be the most obvious reason why the Taiwanese masses utilize *dang-ki* healing and which also contributes to its effectiveness.

The Dang-Ki's Personal Quality. The second universal component of psychotherapy which Torrey discusses is the personal quality of the therapist. Torrey maintains that the most notably personal qualities of the therapist are: genuineness, empathy, and warmth.¹⁶ It should be pointed out that the studies to which Torrey refers were all conducted with Western psychotherapists. Similar studies of nonwestern therapists were not cited. As Galanti states that most nonwestern psychotherapists do not always display such personal qualities.¹⁷ It is described that some of the more common attributes of shamans

¹⁶ Torrey, p. 35.

¹⁷ Galanti, p. 54.

are as follows:

They invoke awe, mystery, admiration, and faith. They relate to the patient impersonally, through a respected and feared role. Genuineness, empathy, and warmth are not part of the persona the typical shaman uses when treating a patient.²⁰

In the field trip I met some *dang-kis* who possessed a good sense of humor; others did not. Some were impressive; others were not. However, the clients whom I interviewed indicated that an effective *dang-ki* is one who is charismatic, genuine, sensitive, experienced, and directive. Other personal qualities like warmth and empathy, which have been mentioned by Torrey as necessary, are not seen as of importance by the *dang-ki's* clients. One of them even reported to me that the *dang-ki* he saw was neither warm nor empathic, but he has returned to the same *dang-ki* for healing whenever it is needed. Among the above personal qualities I found that "charisma" is regarded as the most important characteristic for the *dang-ki*. This shows that *dang-ki's* clients are more concerned with qualities which display the *dang-ki's* "power" and "authority." In practice the power and authority of *dang-kis* is dramatically demonstrated and reinforced through possession and rituals. Thus, the *dang-ki* has the power-

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Ibid.

authority of a god as well as the quality of counselor.

The Client's Expectation. Torrey's third component for effective psychotherapy is to raise the client's expectation. He asserts that anything that will raise the client's expectations that he/she will be cured may actually facilitate the cure.²¹ In a study of the locus of effectiveness in psychotherapy, the researchers focused on the client's faith in the treatment and therapist as the most important variable common to all forms of psychotherapy.²² Ferome Frank also writes that "the success of all methods and schools of psychotherapy depends in the first instance upon the patient's conviction that the therapist cares about him and is competent to help him."²³

If the client's expectation of being helped is so significant in general psychotherapy, the vital factor of the client's expectation and faith in *dang-ki* healing is beyond description. All my observations and conversations

²¹ Ibid., p. 55.

²² Ibid.

²³ Jerome Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 165.

with the *dang-kis* supported the theory that the most positive outcomes of *dang-ki* healing are with clients who have unwavering faith in the healer him/herself. In fact when a *dang-ki* is tranced, he/she is believed to be not only the god's spokesperson, but the god is actually present in him/her and performs the healing. Since the tranced *dang-ki* is the god incarnate, he/she is able to help people with all sorts of illnesses and problems. The insights, advice, and explanations obtained from the healer, are therefore believed to have come directly from god. An informant told me that occasionally a *dang-ki* may describe the client's problems without prior information. By doing so the client's faith in the healer is highly raised and the personal prestige of the healer's power is dramatically increased. Rogers observes the same technique used by shamans and regards that,

This is extremely effective and creates an image of "omniscience" on the part of the shaman. The shaman's (*dang-ki's*) success in such mysterious insight is undoubtedly accomplished through a combination of keen observation, common sense, confidential informers, and good luck.²⁴

Finally, it should be noted that another aspect involved in raising a client's expectations is the therapist's belief in him/herself and in the efficacy of the

²⁴

Rogers, *The Shaman: His Symbols*, p. 139.

treatment. A therapist's expectations for client improvement are an important factor in successful psychotherapy.²⁵ Henry Sigerist states,

It can be reasonably assumed that the medicine man (shaman) is sure of himself and feels secure in the cultural context in which he operates. An important part of his healing ability rests on his self-confidence, and he usually seems to have a high measure of it.²⁶

For *dang-ki* healing to be effective the clients are strongly expected to have faith in the healer (god). By the same token it should be the *dang-ki*'s moral obligation that they work with clients because they believe they (gods) can heal. Most *dang-kis* and their assistants whom I observed often reflected a feeling of optimism and a positive statement of hope about their healing prior to and after the consultation. In regards to the expectation-faith issue or man-god participation in *dang-ki* healing, one *dang-ki* told me that,

Many *dang-kis* can be divided into two categories: some depend more on mysterious or god's participation, while others depend more on their own skills. The proportion of healers' skills and god's participation is about 3 to 7 in the former group, and 7 to 3 in the latter group.

²⁵ Galanti, p. 55.

²⁶ Henry Sigerist, *A History of Medicine: Primitive and Archaic Medicine* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 177.

Dang-kis fixed in the latter group usually are older and more experienced.²⁷

The Skillful Technique. The final component of effective psychotherapy which Torrey discusses is therapeutic techniques (such as confession, suggestion, hypnosis, dream interpretation, conditioning, empty chair, psychodrama...). An effective counselor must be aware of the client's worldview and the expectations that a certain client has about counseling.

A Taiwanese client with an animistic worldview will expect healing to take place through supernatural forces. Apparently, to heal such a person through natural means alone, without any appeal to supernatural power, may leave the client with a sense that he/she has not been completely healed.²⁸ The *dang-ki* realizes that the Taiwanese clients distrust pure "talk therapy." Hence, if *dang-ki* healing is to be effective, active intervention (such as performing rituals, writing charms, giving divination...) and/or physical remedy (such as herbs or die-

²⁷ Personal interview with an experienced *dang-ki*, Mr. C. C. Shih, 27 January 1986.

²⁸ Harold Dollar, "A Cross-Cultural Theology of Healing," (D.Miss. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 68.

tary laws) must also be involved. In other words, besides the talk therapy, the *dang-ki* always does something for the clients and advises them to do something to cope with their problems. Such treatments have a definite psychological effect. Tseng indicates that when a person is in stress and troubled, one always feels the need to be advised to do something to cope with one's anxiety and frustration, whether it has a practical effect or not.²⁹

The effectiveness of *dang-ki* healing lies in the fact that *dang-kis* do not only give practical advice, they also utilize active treatments. Kleinman comments on the *dang-ki's* techniques and says,

Clients in Taiwan expect to receive both symbolic (sacred) and instrumental (secular) therapeutic interactions, and *dang-kis* expect to provide both. This aspect of the clinical reality established in shaman-client transactions differs from that found in interactions with other practitioners, which is organized around either symbolic or instrumental treatment, but usually not both.³⁰

In short, *dang-kis* have specific techniques which not only can cure the disease but also cure the illness in the context of the client's culture. They are flexible and skillful enough in utilizing their techniques that the

²⁹ Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," p. 174.

³⁰ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 242.

healing is most effective under each specific condition involved.

The Dang-Ki's Unique Factors

Sanctioned Explanations

Case 1

(A woman in her early 40's rushes into the *dang-ki's* shrine and breaks into sobs and wails. She is extremely distraught. A thief has broken into the secret place where her money was kept, and has taken most of her money and gold. Other clients in the shrine begin to talk with her softly. They try to comfort her, but she seems to be uncontrollable. Although many other clients were ahead of her, the *dang-ki's* assistant calls her as the next client and consoles her by saying: "Don't be too sad in the loss of your money. It must have some meaning." Having heard the distracted woman report the sad story, the *dang-ki* says loudly:)

DK: The thief is guilty. He will be greatly punished by the gods! The things are gone... You will not get them back.

(The woman questions the *dang-ki* repeatedly, sometimes angrily. Finally, the *dang-ki's* voice and gestures become much more authoritarian. He tells her:)

DK: It is not the money and the gold that matter. You have to lose them, otherwise something wrong would have happened to you. This is a very unlucky year for you. The most important matter is your fate this year. You must do something about that. I will help you....

(The session ended with the *dang-ki* performing a rather lengthy ritual to "patch her bad fate". He gives her many charms to take home. Before she leaves the shrine, while the *dang-ki*

goes on to treat other cases, the woman talks with waiting clients. She receives additional support and assurance. One tells her: "The god has made it clear that your fate will change." When she leaves the shrine the woman is noticeably relieved).³¹

As Taiwanese culture is characterized by great concern with family relationships, in the *dang-ki's* practice many illnesses (especially mental disturbances) are frequently attributed to the influence of the family's spirit. This is illustrated in the above case. In an anthropological survey, it was found that nearly one-half of such problems are interpreted by the *dang-ki* as being caused by a disturbance of the family's spirits.³² There is psychological significance in citing a supernatural power as the cause of the client's illness. In *dang-ki* healing a devil, a ghost, or a god can serve as a symbol (substitute) of a significant person in one's real life. Such an interpretation is easily accepted by the Taiwanese people. As Tseng comments,

This is particularly appropriate in the Taiwanese society where the relationship of family members is close, and overt conflict between

³¹ Condensed from Kleinman, "Comparisons of Practitioner-Patient Interactions in Taiwan," pp. 345-346.

³² Yih-Yuan Li, "Aspects of the Chinese Character as Viewed from Some Ritual Behaviors," *Academica Sinica* 12, pp. 201-215.

generations is prohibited. A successful *dang-ki* who has been trained to use his sensitive perception to discern the client's problems also knows how to give explanations and advice in terms that are relevant to the client's cultural background and are readily accepted by the client.³³

In regards to this, Tseng gives a good example in the following case.

Case 2

A young man who had been reared as an only child by his step-mother, had a heterosexual adjustment problem that was manifested in frequent psychosomatic disorders after his marriage. The *dang-ki* he consulted interpreted his trouble as the result of a disturbance by the spirit of his deceased mother. The client was advised to propitiate the "mother" by offering sacrificial food. Actually, the problem involved conflict and tension between him, his wife, and his step-mother. But instead of pointing out the actual fact that the step-mother was jealous of the young couple's happy life and resented being neglected, the *dang-ki* chose the more easily accepted symbolic substitute as the explanation--the deceased mother, who was not in the immediate family.³⁴

The above example demonstrates an act of universal clinical importance: The clinician must respond quickly to crises. Kleinman comments that "Almost all the *dang-kis* I observed in Taiwan were skilled at responding quickly to intra- and inter-personal crises."³⁵ In this

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," p. 167.

³⁵ Ibid.

case and case 1, the *dang-ki* applies one of the most powerful Taiwanese cultural concepts: the idea of fate (*ming*). In *dang-ki* healing fate explanation is culturally and religiously sanctioned, and it is more real than biological or sociological explanations. As a matter of fact, it is very rare for a *dang-ki* to give explanations and advice in psychological or sociological terms. It is commendable that the *dang-ki* provides the clients with a timely and culturally endorsed explanation as well as an appropriate religious model of treatment.

Case 3

(The *dang-ki*'s client is a female who is 29 years of age. She and her husband, age 35, have been married for 12 years and they have 4 children. The client seems to be very hopeful when the *dang-ki* talks to her.)

DK: What is your problem?

Cl: My husband left me and our children, and I was told he is now living with a young woman who used to live in the next town. Should I divorce him?

DK: Your fate shows that you could only marry this man. Don't worry, your good fortune is coming back. It is not your husband's fault, but rather his soul was controlled and directed away by the young woman, and she is disturbed by the spirits of her ancestors.

Cl: Will he come back?

DK: Yes, in 10 days (which is before the

Chinese New Year) or 3 months. Don't blame him when he returns. Treat him well and bring him here to see me.

(The *dang-ki* gives her two charms and instructs that one is for the client to help her sleep well and the other is for her husband to drink it when he comes home. The *dang-ki* ends this session with a rather lengthy ritual to calm the client's soul, and to direct the husband's soul to return home soon.)³⁴

Again, the above case shows that the *dang-ki*'s explanation is given in symbolic terms: "Your husband's soul was controlled and directed away by the (confused and disturbed) young woman," rather than pointing out that "your husband is having an affair with the young woman." This sanctioned explanation reserves room for the husband to come home with forgiveness from the wife and the family (the blame goes to the luring young woman). This may give the couple a better chance to work out their marriage in the future, if he comes home. Generally speaking, from a cultural perspective, the explanation given by the *dang-ki* is often conservative. Frequently, the client is encouraged to be patient, to endure, to reconcile, and to make an effort to cultivate oneself.

The above cases illustrate the effective combination of the explanatory functions and the therapeutic

³⁴ From my field observation.

treatments often used in *dang-ki* healing. The sanctioned explanations of the causes of illness and problems are the key to understanding *dang-ki* healing. The *dang-ki*s are trusted within the cultural and religious domains because they link the illness and problems with supernatural explanations and provide the clients with a specific, concrete target to deal with. The *dang-ki* is not allowed, within the cultural context, simply to diagnose without treating or to place the responsibility for treatment on the client alone. Therefore, each explanation is immediately followed by an active treatment, and the more treatments given the better.³⁷

The power of the *dang-ki*'s sanctioned explanation lies in precisely the fact that it is the cultural reality for the *dang-ki* and client. *dang-ki*s explicitly use the whole cultural reality as a background for giving a meaningful interpretation for the illness. The illness is "framed" in a sanctioned cultural context that makes it understandable and acceptable, as well as rendering it treatable. Indeed, the sanctioned explanation itself is therapeutic.

³⁷ Kleinman, ed., *Culture and Healing in Asian Societies*, p. 340.

Public Support. The last but not the least unique factor that brings about the psychotherapeutic efficacy in *dang-ki* healing is the therapeutic interactions between the client and the paratherapist. Paratherapists are defined as persons in the shrine who informally interact with the client in the whole healing process. They are the untranced *dang-kis*, the assistants, the client's family members and friends, and the spectators. The formal interaction takes place when the client consults the tranced *dang-ki*. Both formal and informal types of interaction have therapeutic effects and both are conducted in public. The public character of *dang-ki* healing interactions obviously influences therapeutic communication and clinical style.³⁸

As has been mentioned the formal consultation in *dang-ki* healing normally lasts from a few minutes to just less than an hour. However, a *dang-ki*'s client may remain in the shrine sometimes up to several hours which is spent rather informally or socially. During this time clients and their family members socialize among themselves and

³⁸ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture*, p. 239.

with the untranced *dang-kis* or the assistants inside and outside the main hall, much as they would with neighbors and friends.

In *dang-ki* healing a significant effect comes from the support of the paratherapists. At the end of each formal consultation the assistant often encourages a client by saying, "Don't worry and be hopeful; your faith in god will help you!" When a client returns to sitting on the bench, the family members and friends form a small circle around the client. They comfort and encourage the client, affirming to the individual that he/she will soon get well. "You have no problems!" is a sentence often heard among the clients in the shrine to assure and support one another. In regard to public supports, many times I observed the same group dynamics as Kleinman did,

Others (paratherapists) in the shrine would give the client and the family members who accompanied the client friendly and reassuring advice, often of a quite practical problem-solving nature, or they would ask the client to tell their stories. Clients and family members would disclose full accounts of their problems to sympathetic listeners several times at least in the course of healing.³⁷

Apparently, the psychotherapeutic efficacy of *dang-ki* healing contains a unique factor of supportive

³⁷ Ibid., p. 318.

therapy. Such support is significant in several aspects. First, the client is momentarily the focus of attention of the group in the shrine. This gives the client a feeling that his/her recovery is of concern to the group. The client's expectation of a positive outcome is further strengthened by those well-wishers. By doing so, the client also feels that he/she is forgiven for whatever blame might have been held against the client for the effect of his/her transgression on the welfare of the community.⁴⁰ Before leaving the shrine, the client (and/or the family) may have retold their stories several times. Each time the client receives additional support and encouragement which may be psychotherapeutically effective.

As it has been pointed out, not only the supportive response of paratherapists but also their attentive listening when the client speaks about his/her problems may reinforce whatever catharsis occurred and the persuasive aspects of the case.⁴¹ It is interesting that the *dang-ki* (the therapist) does little listening beyond finding out what the surface problems are, but the major

⁴⁰ Rogers, p. 148.

⁴¹ Kleinman, "Comparisons of Practitioner-Patient Interactions in Taiwan," p. 339.

listening is done by the paratherapists, a kind of peer-counseling or co-counseling model. Furthermore, another important part of public support is that most of the persons present in the shrine are usually healthy and well and tend to demonstrate vitality rather than to reinforce a mood of sickness and debility, as in a modern hospital environment.⁴²

Finally, the psychotherapeutic efficacy of *dang-ki* healing is significantly related to the use of the setting where public support is provided. Some *dang-kis* could not have the same impact and effectiveness outside the appropriate setting (such as a temple, shrine, or ancestral hall). On several occasions when *dang-kis* were invited to psychiatric wards to treat patients, the same healing effect did not occur.⁴³ Apparently, a significant aspect of the *dang-ki's* psychotherapeutic function in treating the clients is through the symbolic efficacy of the shrine. In a *dang-ki* shrine the atmosphere and the setting contribute in the mind of the clients to a belief that important, in fact, supernatural steps are being taken on their behalf.

⁴² Frank, p. 140.

⁴³ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture*, p. 222.

Thus, a client by entering into the *dang-ki's* shrine for help has already begun his treatment. Some *dang-ki's* clients stated to me with satisfaction that "Just being in the shrine makes me stop worrying and begin to feel calm and relaxed." "Upon entering the shrine a big part of my tensions and anxieties are relieved." In contrast, many Taiwanese patients who seek treatment in a Western-style hospital are immediately annoyed by the cold, detached, impersonal and mechanical attitudes of the surroundings and the staff.

CHAPTER 8

EVALUATION OF DANG-KI HEALING

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF DANG-KI HEALING

Nzunga Mabudiga describes African indigenous healers as ministers, teachers, counselors, and philosophers of the community with the following words.

The indigenous healers are people with unusual talents. They combine experience and observation to their practice.... They respond to the immediate needs of the society, needs which could not be met otherwise. They detect the broken relationship, and suggest ways of repairing or restoring them.¹

Examining mental health services and cultural change, J. S. Neki and H. N. Higginbothan both conclude that in certain cultures, folk healers may be more effective than Western-trained professionals.²

¹ Nzunga Mabudiga, "Some Implications of Indigenous Healing for the Christian Church in Zaire," (D.Min. dissertation, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1980), p. 75-76.

² J. S. Neki, "An Examination of the Extent of Responsibility of Mental Health Services from the Standpoint of Developing Communities," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 24 (1987): 204-19; H. N. Higginbothan, *Third World Challenge to Psychiatry: Culture Accommodation and Mental Health Care* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), p. 49.

The same comparison can also be made in Taiwan and the result shows that the health care outcomes of folk healing are better than that of Western healers. The findings, supported by analysis of 100 clients treated by different kinds of folk healers, shows that the overwhelming majority of them (i.e. 90 percent) are satisfied with the folk care they receive. They believe folk healing is at least partially effective. However, in the other 10 percent of the samples which includes those with severe acute diseases, these people are not satisfied with folk care and do not believe it to be effective.³ The significant difference between the two healing systems (folk and modern) is in the treatment of severe acute disorders, where Western-style practitioners are rated by their clients as very effective.

Scientific evaluation of *dang-ki* healing is difficult because of its complexity and its relationship with the deeply rooted indigenous culture. Although much of the following evaluation of *dang-ki* healing are mainly based on the client's subjective assessment, all the evidence is consistent in supporting the finding that the

³ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 114, 331.

dang-ki's treatment is successful. An interesting survey⁴ compared several groups of clients seen by both Western-style doctors (physicians and psychiatrists) and *dang-kis* and asked for their evaluation of the care they had received. The patient's satisfaction for the Western-style treatment ran between 30 and 35 percent. The patient's satisfaction for the *dang-ki's* treatment was 85 percent. Most patients in the Western-style treatment complained of receiving lack of sufficient time and explanations. Most patients in the *dang-ki's* group stress the importance of meaningful explanations. Li believes that "although the *dang-kis'* methods include a large amount of irrational superstition they are not without their positive side."⁵ The finding of Li's survey⁶ shows that 89 percent of his sample clients treated by *dang-kis* were actually cured. They were suffering mainly from psychological or psychosomatic disorders, while the other (about 11 percent) sample clients had serious organic dysfunction. "In other words," Li comments, "The *dang-kis'* treatment was similar

⁴ Ibid., p. 291.

⁵ Peter Eberly, "Li Yih-Yuan: Renowned Anthropologist," *Sinorama* 6 (June 1985): 80-85.

⁶ Ibid.

to psychiatric care. It is not just an object of study for anthropologists and sociologists but can also offer valuable lessons to the medical profession."⁷

The data shown above is very impressive and is evidence in favor of the effectiveness of *dang-ki* healing. *Dang-ki* healing has functioned for so long throughout history that it must be effective to a great extent. *Dang-ki* healing is very different from modern healing methods, but it is often the way to normality for its clients. As one of the *dang-ki*'s clients positively states "the healer has changed my fate as well as healed my body."

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF DANG-KI HEALING

Positive and negative aspects of *dang-ki* healing sometimes are intertwined. As the previous discussion of positive aspects of *dang-ki* healing has noted, there are some negative aspects which need to be pointed out. The *dang-ki* usually is very capable in treating various kinds of illnesses and problems (such as psychosomatic and psychosocial disorders), but he/she is not always effec-

⁷ Ibid.

tive with all kinds of problems. From a psychiatric point of view, *dang-ki* healing is effective in minor psychiatric care, but not in severe psychiatric cases. If a *dang-ki* were so ambitious as to pretend that he/she is omnipotent to solve all the client's problems, then there is the possibility he/she might do harm to a client by delaying the effective psychiatric treatment that the client needs.⁸

Theoretically, *dang-kis* are supposed to be superior in that they know everything about the client and his/her needs. In practice, they can only use their sensitive perception to speculate about the client rather than to inquire directly. This certainly limits them in obtaining enough information to avoid a premature diagnosis.⁹ Tseng also criticizes that,

Communicating with the client in symbolic terms and suggesting that the client cope with problems by ritual methods may easily gratify the client's needs. However, there is always the risk that such treatment will lead the client to remain at the primary level, making the client reluctant to mature and learn to think at secondary levels and to function more rationally as is desirable according to modern psychotherapy.¹⁰

⁸ Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," p. 176.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Strong belief in the miraculous healing by *dang-kis* has been criticized as the basic hindrance to the establishment of modern/Western medicine in Taiwan. Not all *dang-kis* may act like the two of the *dang-kis* I interviewed who realized the situation and advised their clients to consult a medical doctor. Indeed, belief in the possessing of god's powers to heal may reduce the *dang-kis*'s willingness to refer clients to other adequate treatments. This may result in tragic outcomes: such as induce sickness and reportedly death. As Kleinman warns,

From the perspective of the modern professional, folk healers (*dang-kis*) are viewed as dangerous, because they can not define the disease in scientific terms and fail to treat it, which could have potentially disastrous results for patients.¹¹

The sociocultural reality which is the great strength of *dang-ki* healing is its great weakness also. The weakness is that *dang-kis* tend to overemphasize the rigidly traditional norms in dealing with personal or interpersonal problems. These include the hierarchical system, the stereotypical view of both male and female roles, the double sexual standard for males, and the interest of a family as always being put before the wel-

¹¹ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, pp. 355-56.

fare of an individual. A goal for all counselors and therapists is to help their clients to settle their immediate problems. But there are other pertinent goals in counseling, such as to affirm individuals and to facilitate their growth, to raise consciousness of men-women equality, and to liberate clients from boxed-in situations and stereotyped role expectations in a given culture. This is a tremendous challenge to *dang-kis* to be sensitive to the sociocultural context on the one hand and to respect the individuals and their needs on the other. In other words, *dang-kis* operate within sociocultural expectations with no guidelines to critically evaluate those socioculturally accepted norms. This is a big concern for the liberated counselor.

Finally, in the Chinese tradition the power and the authority of shamans (*wus*) are respected, trusted and feared. The allure of power and authority could overcome even the best of intentions, and the chief temptation of the shaman is to use it for personal gain.¹² Because of the authority and the power the shaman is potentially able

¹² John Grim, "The Shaman: An Interpretation of This Religious Personality," (Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1980), p. 88.

to exercise, there is, of course, a danger of *dang-ki's* being abusive of the given authority and power for his/her own interests. The *dang-ki* is not licensed in Taiwan and it is no doubt that there are fake healers. These persons imitate the *dang-kis'* behavior to defraud the public for their personal profits (wealth, power, and sex). In Taiwan, they are known as *shen-guans* or "divine quacks." These *shen-guans* only bring harm to their clients. Newspapers have been known to report instances where incompetence of the *dang-ki* or quack "*dang-kis*" treatment has led to the clients' suffering (physical and mental), rape, or death.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON DANG-KI HEALING

The above discussion brings up the necessity of further and more in-depth evaluation of each *dang-ki* case according to its client and special circumstance. Although it is necessary to be critical and to evaluate the practicality of *dang-ki* healing, psychiatrist Tseng urges that it is wise not to take a negative attitude toward such a healing system.¹³ However, the negative impact of *dang-ki*

¹³ Tseng, "Traditional and Modern Psychiatric Care in Taiwan," p. 325.

healing in increasing the overly fearful feeling of the clients toward deities, needs to be cautioned. Today, we (Christian ministers) can not simply say "no" to *dang-ki* healing. From a secular view point, the Christian church and its faith healing are similar to *dang-ki* healing, and the differences between them are their religious faith and formality. From a shamanic perspective, Jesus may well be regarded as the Great Shaman of all times.

There can be little doubt that *dang-ki* healing is frequently effective and that the local people are often benefited by the *dang-ki*'s services. While there is evidence to indicate activities of a deceptive nature on the part of some *dang-kis*, their services are often demanded in Taiwan. Predictably, *dang-ki* healing will continue to prevail for many years to come. Considering the well-being of the Taiwanese mental health care, there is no way for modern psychotherapy to replace *dang-ki* healing. In contrast, as suggested by Galanti, folk healers (such as psychics and shamans) and psychotherapists could successfully work together in treating a client.¹⁴ Mabudiga points out that culturally and practically, the indigenous

¹⁴ Galanti, p. 233.

healing approach may be called to work hand in hand with the modern system of healing.¹⁵

The two subsectors of health care in Taiwan (traditional/folk and modern/Western styles) maintain a competitive relationship with very little or no dialogue and referral between them. It is said, however, in the People's Republic of China, they are integrated by active referral, professional consultation, combined treatment, and even an attempt at sharing (to some degree) knowledge and skills.¹⁶ It is important that proper attention and support should be given to *dang-ki* healing and other forms of folk healing so that maximum service of health care can be provided for the whole Taiwanese society.¹⁷ C. C. Wu, a senior social worker, expressed her feelings toward *dang-kis* by saying, "I would not dialogue or consult with them, but I would give them referrals."¹⁸ Personally, I am hoping that when working with some traditionally or

¹⁵ Mabudiga, p. 4.

¹⁶ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 61.

¹⁷ Tseng, "Traditional and Modern Psychiatric Care in Taiwan," p. 325.

¹⁸ Personal interview with C. C. Wu, a senior social worker, 20 January 1986.

indigeniously oriented clients, I may incorporate folk beliefs or even a folk healer into the therapeutic process. Needless to say, to integrate and incorporate folk services into a comprehensive modern health care system is a very difficult and challenging task.

PART THREE
THE IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER 9

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DANG-KI HEALING

As was noted earlier, cultural reality and religious faith are the two most significant dimensions in *dang-ki* healing. What theological implications can be drawn from *dang-ki* healing for the pastoral counselor? To answer this question there are other related questions which need to be asked at the same time: What is the Christian view of culture? And what is the Christian attitude towards the folk religion that is deeply-rooted in Taiwan? The best way to deal with these questions is first to review and summarize the Christian missions in China and Taiwan, and then theologically reflect on indigenization.¹

¹ For further and in-depth discussions on the subject please read: James Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an Fu* (New York: Paragon Books, 1966); Jessie Lutz, *Christian Missions in China: Evangelists of What?* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1965); Robert G. Orr, *Religion in China* (New York: Friendship Press, 1980); A. F. Glasser, "Timeless Lessons From the Western Missionary Penetration of China," 13 (1973): 143-49; Francis C. M. Wei, *The Spirit of Chinese Culture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947); T. Y. Yeh, *Confucianism, Christianity and China* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1969); and Gates, "Christianity and Animism : China and Taiwan".

**A CRITICAL SUMMARY OF
THE CHRISTIAN MISSION TO THE CHINESE**

The Christian Mission in China

The history of Christian missions to China goes back as far as the seventh century. Christianity was first introduced to China and known as Nestorianism *Jin-Chiao*. From the beginning, the Nestorian missionaries tried to harmonize Christianity and Chinese culture by wrongly adopting Buddhism into their mission. They did not understand that Buddhism was then regarded as a foreign religion. Two hundred years later, the Nestorians were viewed as merely another Buddhist sect. They were persecuted as a result of court intrigue, which was master-planned by the Buddhists. When the storm blew over, Buddhism was able to rise again.² The price Christianity paid for this mistake was extinction.

The second penetration of Christianity into China was made during the Mongol Dynasty which began in the early thirteenth century. During the next hundred years of the dynasty the Christian missionaries became very

² Wei, pp. 10-13.

intimate politically with the much hated conquerors. The Christians in China were mostly Mongols or those who had a tie with the Mongolian government. Apparently because of that they would not or could not be significantly related to the Chinese culture. As a result when the foreign rulers left so did the foreign religion (Christianity).

In the mid-sixteenth century the Christian mission began its third thrust into China. It was the policy of the Jesuits to reach the upper classes without neglecting the poor and the uneducated. In the beginning this met with a good measure of success. Chinese scholars and high officials were converted and the Jesuits were held in favor with the Imperial Court. But then rose the "Controversy on Rites" first among the missionaries and finally between the Pope and the Chinese Emperor. The controversy was originated mainly by the issues of which Chinese terms were to be used for God, whether Chinese Christians should be permitted to participate in the age-long ceremonies in honor of Confucius and in ancestor worship, and whether they should be allowed to participate in community festivals.³ When the controversy came to a dead end, so did the Christian mission. It faded away in the early

³ For details about the "Controversy on Rites", please see Wei, p. 13.

eighteenth century.

The modern Christian missionary movement was one of the major connections between the Western and Chinese people. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more money and more missionaries were sent to China than to any other country. R. G. Orr claims that "the scope and intensity of this effort were unparalleled anywhere else in religious history."⁴ And what were the results? The answer depends largely on the angle from which one views it. From the contemporary Chinese point of view, most missionaries were sincerely motivated by a desire to help China. They brought helpful aspects of Western science, medicine, and education. Unfortunately, their works and contributions were over-shadowed by their connections with Western imperialism. They were linked to Western political and economic powers.⁵ However, among Chinese protests, none was harder to swallow than Western condemnation of Chinese culture and customs.⁶ The negative impressions of Christian missionaries that remained in the minds of the Chinese were: "They depended on the

⁴ Orr, p. 11.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Orr, p. 17.

Western power to preach a Westernized Christianity which did not harmonize with the Chinese culture."⁷

The Christian Mission in Taiwan

Since 1865, the history of Christian missions in Taiwan has been a story of struggle. While the church has been planted, Christianity to this day is still an alien presence, a stranger in the land.⁸ It is estimated that after one hundred and twenty some years of efforts, the Christian community does not exceed two and a half percent of the total Taiwanese population. Meanwhile, indigenous forms of folk religion continue to flourish among approximately 85 percent of the population.⁹ Why has the missionary enterprise experienced only limited success in penetrating the religious life of the Taiwanese?

In addition to those negative impacts carried over from the previous failures in China, another major reason was the missionary's insensitivity to the nature and function of folk religion in the life of Taiwanese

⁷ Glasser, p. 460.

⁸ Gates, "Christianity and Animism: China and Taiwan," p. 154.

⁹ Ibid.

people. Alan Gates, a former missionary to Taiwan keenly observed,

The function of Taiwanese folk religion remained largely unrecognized by these pioneer missionaries. Failing to see how animistic beliefs and practices were the masses only means of access to divine counsel and intervention in their problems, they presented the Gospel in the only way they knew. A few were reached and the church was planted, but the multitudes remained largely untouched.¹⁰

Sadly, although this insensitive attitude was first introduced by missionaries, it was later adopted by local pastors and theologians in Taiwan. The Taiwanese Christians are taught to regard the old ways as inferior and superstitious. To a great extent they are embarrassed over their traditions and culture. As a result, among the Taiwanese Christians there is a strong tension between the indigenous way of life and the new way imposed by Westernized Christianity. For example, the experience of death and bereavement in traditional Taiwanese society is quite different from that in Western society (American middle class). For Westerners, the individual is expected to develop internalized control over his/her feelings and emotions at the time of mourning. For Taiwanese weeping and wailing are not only encouraged but expected. By the

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 244.

Western influence Taiwanese Christians are discouraged and even forbidden to follow some customs in relation to death and bereavement. "Unfilial children" and "To die without mourning" have been the stinging labels for Taiwanese Christians. These have been some of the greatest obstacles to the Christian mission among Taiwanese.

It is very sad that for more than a century little significant encounter has taken place between the Lordship of Christianity and the powers of animism.¹¹ Today, missionaries and local church leaders have yet to develop a serious strategy and indigenous theology to bring about an effective encounter between the two groups. One criticism is that the kerygma of much Christian preaching has been suited more to secular persons of the West than to the Taiwanese people who are deeply influenced by animistic beliefs and practice.¹²

A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON INDIGENIZATION

The past attempts of Christian mission in both China and Taiwan have failed to understand the essence of

¹¹ Gates, p. 244.

¹² Ibid.

Chinese culture and to make a real impact upon it or utilize it as a channel for presenting Christianity to the local Chinese.¹³ The tension between animism and Christianity has been a major obstacle to the church in Taiwan, yet the church has ignored it. Hopefully, the Taiwanese church today has learned some hard lessons from the above review of the history of Christian missions to the Chinese and Taiwanese.

The first and the most crucial lesson for the Taiwanese church to learn is that it is impossible to ignore the relationship between culture and religion. C. S. Song, who writes on Protestantism in Taiwan, appears to be one of the very few Taiwanese theologians to appreciate the centrality of folk religion within his own culture. He writes, "...religion is the content of culture and culture is the form of religion."¹⁴

There are many different ways of looking at reality among peoples of different cultures and religions. Where there is a different view of reality it is not to be simply looked down on as being inferior or superstitious.

¹³ Wei, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ C. S. Song, "Whither Protestantism in Asia Today," *South-East Asia Journal of Theology* 1 (Spring, 1970): 66-76.

Jesus indicated that he came not to abrogate the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them.¹⁵ Jesus accepted people as they were. He did not dismiss their culture but enhanced it for the well-being of people. In this regard, Christianity has nothing to fear in its contacts with the Taiwanese culture. If Christianity is to be properly understood and accepted by the Taiwanese people, it must be touched and enriched by their own cultural heritage.

C. M. Wei argues that between culture and Christianity there is a mutual necessity. He stresses that,

Culture needs Christianity for enlightenment; Christianity requires culture for better interpretations.... A new emphasis of our religion may thus be brought into prominence to supplement Christianity and to enrich the Christian heritage by bringing it into the cultural heritage of China."¹⁶

Unfortunately, throughout the history of Christian missions to China and Taiwan, Christianity was rigidly wrapped up in Western culture. Many missionaries, consciously or unconsciously, preached a culture of the West instead of the Gospel of Christ.¹⁷ They looked down on or were indifferent to the local culture and religion.

¹⁵ Matthew 5: 17.

¹⁶ Wei, pp. 24, 28-29.

¹⁷ Lutz, *Christian Missions In China*, pp. 83-93.

Deeply influenced by the individualistic orientation of the West, the Taiwanese church has mainly aimed its evangelistic efforts at individuals. Deeply influenced by the western individualistic orientation, the result of this individualistic approach has been to keep Taiwanese away from their immediate and primary social surroundings, which is the family. Those who became Christians, were isolated and rejected. Donald McGavran, the founder of the Church Growth Movement, says, "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers."¹⁸ The Taiwanese people do not want to rebel against their family by becoming Christians. In Taiwan the family must be seen as a unit and to lead the whole family to Christ is the strategy to be emphasized in evangelizing the Taiwanese. It is stated that one should not destroy this "family chain" which is "the bridge of God."¹⁹ Wee-hian Chua witnesses, "In the Chinese church which I serve, I discover that most Christians (80 percent and more) knew the Lord in the

¹⁸ Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 198.

¹⁹ Robert Bolton, "Population: Four Billion," *Taiwan Church Growth Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (1976): 113-21.

context of family ministry."²⁰

Many Taiwanese Christians, especially new converts, are caught in a dilemma. Should they be faithful to the Westernized church or can they preserve their traditions and customs? Peoples in every culture have distinctive ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. We need a Christian view which is balanced, holistic, and positive in its regard for different cultures. Mabudiga is right when he states,

Evangelism is the rediscovering of the heart of the Gospel in the light of any culture. Therefore, it is only when the indigenous life is enriched with the newness of the Christian Gospel that the basic message of Christianity will be relevant to the life of local people. That will be the time people will discover the real meaning of Jesus Christ, salvation, and the universal dimension of Christian love.... Unless the culture of a given people is taken seriously, the Christian faith will tend to be an alienating concept leading to another sort of mental colonization.²¹

Today, many people in Taiwan customarily utilize multiple means, including folk approaches, for healing. When Christians do so they encounter a serious conflict: the Westernized church says no, whereas the masses view it

²⁰ Wee-hian Chua, "Evangelizing the Chinese of the Diaspora," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1971): 26-31.

²¹ Mabudiga, p. 157.

as a suitable alternative. Realistically, God has indeed offered many approaches to healing--many ways to wellness. If only we were truly open-minded we can learn a great deal from folk healing and apply those approaches which are not in conflict with our faith into our healing ministry. The Christian church in Taiwan has been known to lead in the advancement of modern medicine, but it has little or no concern at all about how healing takes place within the local culture. The Taiwanese pastoral counselors and Christian physicians who take healing ministry seriously should neither ignore *dang-ki* healing (and other folk healings) nor reject them as nonsense. We need a theology of healing which emphasizes the wholeness of human existence and recognizes the restored relationship between healing and religion and culture. We need a theology that is biblically dynamic, socially sound, and culturally relevant.

The above discussion clearly shows the urgent and crucial task of indigenization for theological education, evangelism, and pastoral counseling. Indeed indigenization is a challenging task for the cross-cultural professionals in Taiwan such as theologians, evangelists, and pastoral counselors. Without it theologians may introduce a theology alien to the local people, evangelists may convert some people to Christianity without changing their

worldview and leaving them with a confused attitude toward their traditions, and counselors may relieve the client's symptoms but not cure the person.

Theological education in Taiwan has adopted the Western model for too long. It has made Taiwanese ministers and theologians a part of the Western family. If one examines the catalogues of the seminaries in Taiwan, one will easily find that very little attention is given to the study of the local culture and religions. In fact the contents for a Master of Divinity degree program in Taiwanese seminaries is almost the same as their American counterparts. Consequently, the theology taught in the seminary cannot satisfy the Taiwanese people, including the ministers and theologians themselves. The future theological education of Taiwan should aim at equipping ministers to be able to interpret the Christian Gospel in the context of their own culture.

Similarly, although all pastoral counseling in Taiwan is very cross-cultural, the pastoral counselors are not trained to react in such a way. In clinical situations when they face difficult problems they can only fall back upon solutions suggested by Western approaches or Westernized Christian experiences. It is inevitable that when the Taiwanese counselors attempt to develop their own counseling theories and techniques, a process of

indigenization must begin. The final evaluation of an indigenous counseling program should be based on whether or not the counselor can provide a Taiwanese solution to a Taiwanese problem.

Finally, according to the strict definition, the word *indigenization* means growing out of one's native culture. It should be cautioned, however, that the word *indigenization* has been used too narrowly. As Wing-Hung Lam notes,

Indigenization is not a retreat to the ancient culture, imitating traditional customs and practices. Nor is it reluctance to cooperate with the West, following a form of anti-foreignism. Also it is wrong to conceive of indigeneity as the abandonment of the rich Christian experience of the establishment of a new Christianity by merely fusing it with the Chinese culture, which would become "neither a horse nor a donkey."²²

Indigenization, in its simplest expression is to properly re-examine and integrate the two streams of knowledge, experiences, and tradition of the Christian Bible and the Taiwanese culture. The subject of *indigenization* should include all aspects of the church (theology, evangelism, music, worship, healing, counseling....). Hence it calls for the whole church to meet the challenge. All the local

²² Wing-Hung Lam, *Chinese Theology in Construction* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983), p. 59.

Taiwanese Christian professionals should bear the responsibilities of carrying out the task of indigenization. The sooner the task of indigenization is undertaken, the less the Taiwanese church will suffer from the stigma of being a foreign institution.

CHAPTER 10
THE PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS OF DANG-KI HEALING

RECOVERING THE PASTORAL IDENTITY

In recent years an increasing number of American clients who would formerly have sought help from a pastor have been receiving secular psychotherapy. This fact is not simply because science has greater prestige than religion. It is because many so called pastoral counselors disregard their unique role to such an extent that they have lost their professional identity. Although there are many who may still call themselves pastoral counselors, their methodologies are simply borrowed from secular disciplines--they are totally secularized. They may be regarded as professional but certainly not pastoral counselors. Today, many people see no difference between pastoral counselors and secular therapists except that the former are generally more poorly trained than the latter.

In fact, the pastoral counselor practicing within the Christian faith, has a unique function which differs from, but is not less competent than, the secular counselor. All pastoral counselors should give their best efforts

to recovering their lost professional identity. It is significant that the revised edition of Oates' first published book, *The Christian Pastor*, shifted the emphasis from a task-oriented and work-centered definition of pastoral counseling to a being-oriented and identity-centered integrity role of pastor.¹ Howard Clinebell describes the task which pastoral counseling is now facing by saying,

Pastoral counseling must find a new level of self-identity and maturity, by deepening its theological roots, broadening its methodology, and discovering its unique contribution to the helping of troubled humanity, with reference to both its own heritage and the other helping disciplines.²

Though speaking of pastoral care, Yu's following statement should bring attention to the Taiwanese pastoral counselor as well. He says,

The challenge for Taiwanese pastoral care (counseling) lies in its dual tasks of being Taiwanese and being pastoral. To meet such a challenge, it must avoid two pitfalls. One is the uncritical adaptation of the Taiwanese tradition. And the other is the thoughtless imposition of Judeo-Christian values upon those who do not share a Judeo-Christian worldview. The former will result in the loss of pastoral identity, and

¹ Walter Jackson, "The Oates Agenda for Pastoral Care," in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care*, eds. Gerald Borchert and Andrew Lester (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), p. 126.

² Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), pp. 16-17.

the latter in the defeat of the caring purpose.³

In Taiwan *dang-kis* are symbols of group identity in the folk religion. They are confident authorities, whose abilities and identity are recognized by their community. Simply speaking, the *dang-kis* are successful healers (counselors) because they act exactly as a *dang-ki*. In *dang-ki* healing the healer intentionally and explicitly performs the sacred rituals, gives religious explanations, and exercises spiritual authority. This should remind those counseling pastors and pastoral counselors to recover their lost identity and to function accordingly--to emphasize the spiritual dimensions. For this reason, prayer, meditation, scripture, devotional materials, and other Christian resources such as Holy Communion and Confession should be properly utilized in pastoral counseling.

The healing art of *dang-kis* can also be seen from their effective application of the combined treatments both natural and supernatural, god and person. In *dang-ki* healing the *dang-ki*, the client, and the god form a healing unit, a gestalt which is very cohesive. In its unique aspect, every pastoral counseling process involves three

³ Yu, p. 211.

parties as well: the divine Participant, the counselor, and the counselee. From a secular point of view an effective psychotherapy closely relies on the client's faith in the therapist and/or the techniques. Because of the significance of faith in counseling, pastoral counselors have a distinct advantage. On the one hand they do not ignore the capability of therapists and their techniques in which they trust. On the other hand there is another dimension to their faith--God is present in their counseling situation. In other words they bring God to the counselees and their problems so that the outcomes of counseling will be more productive. Convinced by the importance of religious faith in *dang-ki* healing, J. K. Wen, a secular psychiatrist, repeatedly states that, "In mental health care we need god(s) as much as we need men!"⁴ If Wen's conviction is significant to secular psychotherapists, it should be even more so to pastoral counselors.

All counseling should begin with the counselor him/herself. It is the counselor's personality and identity that facilitate the client's change and growth. Nevertheless, counseling today lacks balance because the

⁴ Personal interview with Jung-Kwang Wen, a prominent young psychiatrist in Taiwan, 31 January 1986.

focus of the profession has been overwhelmingly on the client instead of the counselor. It is encouraging that when reflecting on the *Tao-Te Ching* and his personal experience in counseling, Gray Boetger attempts to redirect the focus of thinking, doing, and feeling back to the counselor.⁵ For this reason the counselor's first client is necessarily him/herself and thus one must balance one's therapeutic reaching out activities with an equally therapeutic reaching in, to discover personal needs, hang-ups, projections, and limitations.⁶ In this regard, to be an effective pastoral counselor one must have a genuine and vivid sense of one's own humanity including the wounded part. Pastoral counselors will minister best to others as wounded healers. Henri Nouwen suggests in his book by that title,

Making one's own wounds a source of healing does not call for a sharing of superficial personal pains but a constant willingness to see one's own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all people share.⁷

I believe when the pastoral counselor functions in this

⁵ Boetger, pp. 38-39.

⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷ Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 90.

context the spiritual dimension of counseling will inevitably flow out, whether or not theological or spiritual language is used. *Dang-kis* are wounded healers. They make their own wounded conditions (pain and suffering in training as well as mortification in healing) available to their clients as a source of healing. They are wounded so that they can help others. Michael Harner well reflects that,

The shaman shows his patients that they are not emotionally, physically, and spiritually alone in their struggles against illness and trauma. The shaman shares his special powers and convinces his patients, on a deep level of consciousness, that another human is willing to offer up his own self to help them.^e

EMPHASIZING HOLISTIC HEALING

While emphasizing the need of recovering the lost identity, pastoral counseling today urges the return of the shaman--the wounded healer. Spencer Rogers concludes from his studies of shamanism that in shamanic concepts, the whole person is concerned, rather than the idea of a person who consists of separate organs and functions of the mind and body. In shamanic concepts, illness is

^e Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*, p. xiv.

something wrong with the entire being, rather than with a particular part of it. In shamanic healing, the treatment is not given for the client's body in one way, for the mind in another, and for the soul in yet another.⁹

Traditional Chinese medicine has a saying that "a good doctor heals the patient; a poor one treats the disease." In other words, a good practitioner is concerned with the client's whole being. Healing in the Taiwanese animistic worldview is clearly holistic, aiming at the restoration of the functioning balance and harmony within the body, the family, nature, and the spirits. The *dang-ki*'s treatments and interactions with the clients follow this holistic worldview. The explanations that the *dang-ki* gives for the client's problems are derived from traditional thought regarding the constitution and working of the cosmos: ideas that bring all the elements to bear on the problems of the client's adjusting to the universe.¹⁰ The *dang-ki* is a master of ecstasy and a doctor of holistic healing. Even when only physical illness is presented, the *dang-ki* deals with the client holistically. *Dang-ki* healing is a great holistic adventure in which the

⁹ Rogers, *The Shaman: His Symbols*, p. 136.

¹⁰ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan," p. 187.

healer and the client are both actively involved.

The secularization of modern medical systems has come to conclude and defend that health, illness, and healing have no real meaning other than the biophysical realities determined by empirical, rational means.¹¹ Modern psychology also seems to divide the person into different parts, each to be worked with by a different school of thought and each approach is partial and incomplete.¹² This tendency is now being criticized as a serious problem and has led to a search for more holistic approaches in therapy.

The words *holistic* or *wholism* have come into familiar usage among the counseling professionals only in recent years. Clinebell, an advocate of the new movement, charges pastoral counselors by saying:

Our guiding images in pastoral counseling must transcend the old medical (which focuses mainly on the diagnosis and treatment of pathology), to make pastoral care and counseling robustly wholeness-oriented (and therefore more pastoral), in both theory and practice.... This movement toward more "whole brain" healing methods should be a natural for pastoral counselors

¹¹ Meredith McQuire, *Religion: The Social Context* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1981), p. 255.

¹² Swami Ajaya, ed., *Psychology East and West* (Honesdale, PA: Himalayan International Institute, 1978), p. vi.

and counseling pastors. For we have the rich, largely untapped right-brain resources of a spiritual heritage full of archetypal images, stories, rituals, myths, and metaphors which have tremendous potential for use in healing and growth work.¹³

Pastoral counseling is wholeness-oriented in its nature, approaches, and goals. I believe that when the identity of pastoral counselors is recovered the holistic approach of pastoral counseling will be at the same time re-emphasized. Today we need competent pastoral counselors who are competent to handle the client's deepest holistic needs.

¹³ Howard Clinebell, "Revisioning the Future of Spirit-Centered Pastoral Care and Counseling," in *Spiritual Dimensions of Pastoral Care*, eds. Gerald Borchert and Andrew Lester (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 107, 117.

CHAPTER 11

THE CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DANG-KI HEALING

SYSTEMS APPROACH: A CLINICAL FOCUS IN TAIWAN

The most characteristic feature of Chinese culture is the family. Chinese society is family-centered. The individual is only a member, and society only an enlargement of the family.¹ Hsu says,

For the Chinese, his family and its direct and widest extension, the clan, are the beginning and end of his human universe.... The Chinese society can be described as one of kinship solidarity because kinship is its primary and almost its sole principle of organization.²

Influenced by the traditional Chinese culture, the Taiwanese believe that an individual cannot be defined as a person without his/her family. Even the dead are as important as the living for one's physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Any personal dysfunction is a

¹ Andrew Chih, *Chinese Humanism: A Religion Beyond Religion* (Taipei: Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 1981), p. 333.

² Francis Hsu, *Clan, Chaste, and Club* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Press, 1963), p. 234.

matter of the family and consequently is the concern of all the family members. The decision-making process in typical traditional Taiwanese culture is not individual-oriented but family-oriented. What is best for the family turns out to be the final conclusion most Taiwanese people will accept.

Based on this familism, the health care system in Taiwan is family-oriented. Very often, individual problems or illnesses are first dealt with in the family and health-care related decisions, actions, and evaluations made by family key members. As Kleinman has observed, families in Taiwan have much more autonomy in treating sickness than do families in the West. He states,

Not only is care of most adult episodes of sickness in Taiwan limited to the family circle, but even in those illness episodes where care is sought outside the family, decisions about whom to consult, when to consult, and when to comply or change practitioners are made within the context of the family network.³

When there is severe sickness, it is another family member (parent or grandparent) rather than the patient that the practitioner will talk to about the problem. Patients expect this to happen for it is the

³ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, P. 200.

family, not the practitioner or the patient, that in Taiwan is seen as most responsible for the sick person and his/her care.⁴ Thus, it is customary for Taiwanese patients to be accompanied by family members to consult practitioners (as shown in *dang-ki* healing). Sometimes family members may even consult the *dang-ki* or other folk healers on their own without the presence of the ill person. This may appear strange to Westerners, but it is common to the Taiwanese to consider the family as a "practitioner." Indeed, family-patient interactions appear to be the most active form of clinical practice in Taiwan. This shows a major difference in psychotherapeutic approaches between East and West in their emphasis on family and individual respectively.

Most counseling in the West aims at individual well-being and personal growth. This approach is generally ineffective when counseling the Taiwanese client whose life is lived within a web of interdependent and interpersonal relationships. *Dang-ki*s are well aware of their clients' cultural orientation so they provide explanations and treatments and interact with their clients within

⁴ Ibid.

their family systems. Thus, a restoration of the lost harmony between the client and his/her family is one of the primary goals of *dang-ki* healing. Amazed by the effectiveness of *dang-ki* healing in this regard, Li comments that "The *dang-ki* appears almost as a systems analyst or even a practicing social scientist of the functionalist school."⁵

Evelyn Lee, one of the contributors of the recent book *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, points out that,

Working with Chinese families requires taking a holistic view of health and an interactive and contextual perspective on behavior... For assessment data and treatment interventions to have meaning for Chinese clients, the therapist must focus at the same time on the person, his/her family and other significant relationships.⁶

In practice, the modern Taiwanese counselor should recognize the validity and usefulness of intrapsychic exploration as long as the client is not treated as an autonomous and isolated individual. Yu emphasizes,

We should see the individual in the Chinese perspective of *Jen*, that is, human relatedness,

⁵ Yih-Yuan Li, "Shamanism in Taiwan," p. 187.

⁶ Evelyn Lee, "A Social Systems Approach to Assessment and Treatment for Chinese American Families," in *Ethnicity and Family Therapy*, eds. M. McGoldrick, et al. (New York: Guilford Press, 1982), p. 527.

and consider one's crisis and needs as integrally linked with his/her family's needs and crisis. It is in this respect that we find the systems approach, rather than the individualistic approach, more congenial to the Chinese social-cultural context.⁷

This means that effective counseling in Taiwan can only be accomplished by viewing the client as an entity which is part of the family system. The individualistic approach which is influenced by Western culture needs to be supplemented by a family systems approach when counseling a Taiwanese client. In counseling the client, family members should be encouraged to be involved and directed toward therapeutic goals. This entails utilizing the family as a caring, sustaining unit to enhance the outcome of the counseling. Apparently, a family system is very appropriate as a clinical focus in the Taiwanese context, though the counseling techniques will vary and be made to fit the Taiwanese values and style.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there is a special advantage for the Taiwanese pastoral counselor when applying a systems approach in counseling. Taiwanese pastors are the only modern counseling and healing professionals in Taiwan who are accepted as respected members,

⁷ Yu, p. 179.

by the parishioners into their family systems. The Taiwanese pastoral counselor should be aware of and well-equipped to apply the systems approach as an effective clinical methodology.

TWO WAYS OF CLINICAL APPROACH: EAST AND WEST

Psychotherapy exists in every culture. The cultural differences between the two parts of the world provide two ways of managing human problems. A comparison of the philosophy and approaches in psychotherapy between East and West would have much to offer. However, it is not within the scope of this study to give a thorough comparison of the many differences between the classical West and East. Here only a few key terms are listed to indicate some significant contrasts of psychotherapeutic approaches emphasized by the East and West.

The Western Emphasis	The Eastern Emphasis
individual	kinship family
object	subject
analysis	synthesis
structure	being
content	context
left-brain	right-brain
either-or	both-and

American psychiatrist regards the Western approach in terms of structure, content, and analysis. He says,

We change circumstance: this is the province of sociology, engineering, medicine, and the like. Or we change the person; and for psychotherapy this means the mind. We try to make it more flexible, free of habitual impairments, broader, and deeper. But whether the change is in environment or mind, we Westerners see organizations or machines to be modified. These may be institutions like the state, the economic system, the school, the corporation, or the family.... They may be bodily structures, such as muscles, the brain, or the circulatory system. And, for the psychotherapist, they are mental structures--the conscious, the unconscious, the instincts, memory systems, conditioned reflexes, and the like. These are to be strengthened, reshaped, or made to act better. In short, something is to be analyzed, then corrected.⁸

In contrast to this approach, the classical Eastern emphasis is on ways of experiencing. Here synthesis takes the place of analysis, content, and structure. As R. L. Sutherland describes, context, and being,

The goal of the various practices of the Easterners is always to open up what is potentially "there," like the eyes penetrating a fog bank, in contrast to our more familiar process of building and repairing. The being or self is not so much to be repaired like a faulty structure

⁸ R. L. Sutherland, "East, West and Psychotherapy," in *East Meets West: The Transpersonal Approach*, ed. Rosemarie Stewart (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1981), p. 4.

taken down as an ever-changing experience, by means of sharpened consciousness. And we must remember that even this self is a set of image-experiences, transitory, always coming into being anew.⁹

The Western worldview sees the world in a different manner than do those people of the animistic worldview in the East. The Western worldview says that all reality can be analyzed through causes and effects based on the discovery of natural laws.¹⁰ The Eastern worldview sees causes and effects as strong as the Western view. However, the difference is that the Easterners do not usually look for the cause in terms of the natural. They are normally more concerned with supernatural causes. Instead of asking what (germ?) caused a given sickness they may be asking whose (spirit?) caused this to happen.¹¹ In this regard the sanctioned explanations in *dang-ki* healing such as *ming* (fate), *fong sui* (geomancy), and *kui* (ghost) present an Eastern interpretation of what psychotherapy really is.

Furthermore, the modern Western views conceive of the person as an individual (in-divisible)--enduring

⁹ Sutherland, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ Dollar, pp. 107-8.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 67, 107-8.

closed--who has an internally homogeneous structure, while the Eastern theories hold the person to be a dividual (divisible)--open, dyadic--deriving one's personal nature interpersonally.¹² Thus, the Eastern disciplines of growth focus on transpersonal growth: the tendency for each person to become more intimately related to something greater than the individual self (or the tendency to expand the boundaries of the self).¹³ The Western theorists have discussed growth more in terms of strengthening the self: increased autonomy, self-determination, healthy-mindedness (or the tendency to strengthen the boundaries of the self.)¹⁴ The goals of psychotherapy clearly differentiate the approaches between East and West. The psychotherapeutic goals for clients in Western culture are insight, improved personal efficacy, and improved social efficacy, while in Eastern culture the goals are symptom removal, attitude change, and improved interpersonal relationships.¹⁵ Leith Mullings and other psychotherapists have

¹² Sudhir Kakar, *Shamans, Mystics, and Doctors* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), pp. 274-75.

¹³ James Fadiman and Robert Frager, *Personality and Personal Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 353.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Galanti, p. 58.

noted that non-Western therapies diverge significantly from Western psychotherapy in the lack of emphasis on ego-strengthening as a therapeutic goal.¹⁶ For example, in *dang-ki* healing very little attention is given to help a client exploring intrapsyche or developing self insight. Instead of helping the client to gain insight as Western psychotherapy attempts to do, the *dang-ki* seeks to change directly the internal condition of the client, which is believed to have caused the problem or illness.¹⁷

Eastern and Western psychotherapies, though different in many aspects (both in theory and practice), can mutually enrich and learn from each other. It should be cautioned however, this situation must not be a one-way affair, in which the West is simply assimilating the East, or the East is simply transplanting itself into the West. Rather, as John Welwood puts it, "It is a meeting of the ways, and a very fertile one. It is a true cross-fertilization, one that promises to have important, wide-ranging

¹⁶ Leith Mullings, *Therapy, Ideology, and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 6

¹⁷ David Wu, "Psychotherapy and Emotion in Traditional Chinese Medicine," in *Cultural Conceptions of Mental Health*, eds. A. Marsella and G. White (Boston: Reidel Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 293-94.

consequences."¹⁸ The Eastern practitioner can borrow from Westerners something of their stress on the time-centered sense of individual worth, and their effort to improve society and bodily conditions, however transitory these changes may be.¹⁹ Clinebell suggests that people geared toward Western (left-brain) and technological orientation need to discover and develop their neglected right-brain (Eastern) resources.²⁰ Welwood also points out three unique perspectives in which Eastern psychologies can complement the approach of Western psychotherapy. They are:

1. Eastern psychologies always view human beings holistically. They are concerned with human experience as a whole process which is studied in relation to the whole of nature.
2. Eastern psychologies are primarily rooted in direct experience.
3. Eastern psychologies are primarily concerned with understanding human experience in light of an awakened state of mind.²¹

¹⁸ John Welwood, ed., *The Meeting of the Ways: Explorations in East and West Psychology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), p. ix.

¹⁹ Sutherland, p. 7.

²⁰ Clinebell, "Revisioning the Future," p. 116.

²¹ For further discussions on these three unique perspectives in Eastern psychologies please see ed. John Welwood, *The Meeting of the Way*, pp. xi-xvi.

It is evident that in many *dang-ki* healings the adoption of various folk approaches and techniques (such as rituals, divination, herbs, massage, and acupressure) has been clinically proven to be effective. Western-trained Taiwanese counselors should be eager to learn from them and develop applicable indigenous techniques. In short, *dang-ki* healing (Eastern systems) and modern psychotherapy (Western systems) can coexist in Taiwan because they are complementary forms of therapy.

In the last three decades there has been an increasing growth of Western interest in applying Eastern ideas and experiences particularly in the area of psychotherapy. It is an admirable fact that in the past American counseling professionals with curiosity, open-minded attitudes, and scientific methods have quite impressively adopted and modified some Eastern theories and techniques to their systems. Courses, programs, disciplines, techniques, and institutes for the study of Eastern traditions are springing up in the United States. The time seems ripe for bringing together many of the insights and discoveries developing out of the interaction between Western and Eastern theorists and practitioners.²² Realistically,

²² Ibid., p. ix.

although there are some encouraging outcomes from the mutual influence of East and West in psychotherapy, there remains a great need for clarification, interpretation, modification, and assimilation. The need can only be met through joint efforts in dialogue and research between the Eastern and Western professionals who are insightful and sensitive cross-culturally.

CHAPTER 12

THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF DANG-KI HEALING

THE IMPLICATION FOR CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Culture and Psychotherapy

During the last few decades the concept of culture has been an important subject for academic research especially in anthropology, ethnology, and sociology. Culture is seen by anthropologists and ethnologists as the integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance.¹ Culture is far more than behavior or custom. Sociologists (and psychiatrists) emphasize culture as the collective expression of the group's personality: its wishes, values, and ideology.² However, there is a more technical and broader sense customarily used in the behavioral sciences in which the word "culture" has been defined to designate "the

¹ Adamson Hoebel, *Anthropology: The Study of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 6.

² Tseng and McDermott, p. 6.

total nonbiologically transmitted heritage of mankind."³
 Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn summarize the culture concept as follows:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.⁴

In simple terms culture is defined as:

1. One's social legacy,
2. The part of environment created by people,
3. A design for living,
4. The channel for biological processes,
5. A way of thinking, feeling, and behaving,
6. A group's distinctive way of living, and
7. A regulator of our lives.⁵

Each of us is born into and shaped by a particular cultural context. Culture influences one's behavior.

³ Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981), pp. 45-46.

⁴ Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn: *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), p. 357.

⁵ E. F. Foulks, *Current Perspectives in Cultural Psychiatry* (New York: Spectrum Publications, 1977), p. 259.

Hence counseling and psychotherapy must be recognized as cultural phenomena--methods of helping another person must vary from culture to culture and from setting to setting.⁶ Culture significantly affects all healing and caring systems. In fact, caring and healing systems are cultural products. It is noted that healing is a cultural process; illness is culturally constructed from disease in that it is the function of medical systems to translate biological and psychological dysfunctions into meaning and experience for the patient and the social group.⁷ By reducing healing to the language of biology, the human aspects (i.e., psychosocial and cultural significance) of healing are removed, leaving behind something that can be expressed in biomedical terms, but can hardly be called healing.⁸

The above statements raise a prime question for psychotherapists to answer: Is there a culture-free definition of psychotherapy? The answer is "no" if we define psychotherapy not only in static descriptive terms,

⁶ Allen Ivey, "Counseling and Psychotherapy: Toward a New Perspective," in *Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy*, eds. Paul Pedersen and Anthony Marsella (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983), p. 303.

⁷ Mullings, p. 4.

⁸ Kleinman, *Patients and Healers*, p. 364.

but also in dynamic functional terms. Clearly, we can see that culture is fundamental to our understanding of mental health and its services. Culture is a basic variable which interacts with biological, psychological, and environmental variables in determining the causes, manifestations, and treatments of the entire spectrum of mental disorders.⁹ Since psychotherapy is inextricable from culture, the perceptions about problems, the reactions and responses of a client, the family and the practitioner are varied from culture to culture.

Needless to say, a skillful psychotherapist (such as a *dang-ki*) who is more sensitive to cultural reality will function more effectively. When cultural reality is not understood and appreciated by clinicians, their therapy is bound to fail. John and Mary Schwab warn that "Any view of psychotherapy that does not place the client in a cultural perspective is bound to be myopic."¹⁰ "Culture and Psychotherapy" should be an important subject for counseling professionals to study. Unfortunately, the

⁹ A. J. Marsella, et al., *Cultural Conceptions of Mental Health and Therapy* (Boston: Reidel Publishing Co., 1982), p. ix.

¹⁰ John Schwab and Mary Schwab, "The Future of Cultural Psychiatry," in Foulks, p. 260.

essential issue of cultural sensitivity seems to be generally ignored in many clinical practices.

Know Thy Client, Know Thy Culture

Shamanism cannot be understood apart from the cultural context in which it is given expression. Indeed, shamanism cannot be divorced from the cultural arena where its effectiveness is indisputable.¹¹ The *dang-kis* are experts in knowing and being sensitive to cultural reality. As we have learned, *dang-kis* employ a wide variety of culturally sanctioned explanations and culturally related treatments depending on every specific case. They emphasize that an accurate cultural diagnosis should be matched by a culturally sensitive treatment. Thus, not only the *dang-ki's* skillful techniques, but more importantly their providing culturally legitimate treatments, make them a success. The concept and practice of *dang-ki* healing basically is culture-centered, instead of client- or therapist-centered. Apparently, the study of *dang-ki* healing provides us with the insight that psychotherapy should be always carried out in a way that is culturally

¹¹ Scott Robinson, "Toward an Understanding of Kofan Shamanism: Implications for Social Psychiatry," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1976), p. 126.

relevant. This implies understanding the client within his/her cultural context, interpreting problems and suggesting ways of coping with them that are appropriate to the client's background, and maintaining the therapist-client relationship in a culturally relevant way.¹²

The formation of an individual's philosophy of life depends very much upon his/her cultural background. A person's attitude, value judgements, patterns of life, and religious beliefs are largely affected by the culture in which he/she was raised. Culturally speaking, there are always similarities and differences between the therapist and the client. This study reflects the clinical effectiveness of *dang-k* healing in which its practitioners are culturally much closer to their clients than are modern counselors. In Taiwan many modern counselors cannot understand how their clients can believe in fate, ghosts, spirits, or gods. In practice, the clients cannot carry out a genuine dialogue with their therapists about their problems, since they will hesitate to tell them their real thoughts and beliefs. They fear that they will be laughed at when they do so. Speaking from an ethnological point of view, Li shares his concern for modern practitioners by

¹² Tseng, "Folk Psychotherapy in Taiwan," p. 176.

saying, "It is essential for practitioners to be able to communicate the concepts of health and healing in Chinese (Taiwanese) ways to their clients."¹³

Indeed, if counselors are really concerned about meeting their clients needs an understanding of the culture and subculture out of which they have come is essential. As Southard says, "Counseling principles and practices must grow out of information concerning their own culture and be shared through dialogue with the people who can best use it."¹⁴ In this regard, David and Vera Mace conclude from their extensive experiences in counseling with some Asians that,

Marriage and family counseling (other counseling too) in Asia (Taiwan) can best be done by suitably trained Asian (Taiwanese) counselors, who will be personally familiar with the cultural attitudes of the community concerned.¹⁵

Every culture has its clients and its counselors, and when one is counseling a Taiwanese client one should act as a Taiwanese. In short, an effective counselor is a person who "knows thy client" and "knows thy culture."

¹³ Personal interview with Professor Yih-Yuan Li, 7 February 1986.

¹⁴ Samuel Southard, "Pastoral Counseling in East Asia," *Pastoral Psychology* 21 (March 1970): 199-205.

¹⁵ David Mace and Vera Mace, *The Christian Family in Asia* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1985), p. 23.

THE IMPLICATION FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COUNSELING

Cross-Cultural Counseling: A New Frontier

All Counseling is Cross-Cultural. The origins of cross-cultural orientation in psychotherapy and counseling can be traced to two kinds of cultural contact situations:

1. The anthropological and ethnographic study of remote, different, and primitive cultures; and
2. The clear day-to-day experience of cultural variation in the modern pluralistic and complex societies, such as that of the United States.¹⁴

It is estimated that by the year 1990, more than half of the population in California (especially in the south land) will be of racial and ethnic minorities. Today, in any pluralistic society professional counselors are being called upon increasingly to help and to heal cross-culturally. This situation creates tremendous problems and calls for a new kind of openness and willingness on the part of counseling professionals. D. Hesselgrave claims that "They (counseling professionals) should be among the first to address themselves to the potential of

¹⁴ Draguns, "Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy," p. 14.

relating to people of differing cultural and religious backgrounds in a culturally appropriate manner."¹⁷

The need and development of cross-cultural counseling was first originated by the increased contact between ethnic groups at the international and national levels. However, if we broaden the idea of cross-cultural counseling to contact at the personal level (between role groups)--with deliberate attention to differences between the counselor and the counselee--all counseling would become cross-cultural.¹⁸ Paul Pedersen stresses that the concept of cross-cultural counseling should include almost all differences. He says,

If we consider the value perspectives of age, sex role, life style, socioeconomic status, and other special affiliations as cultural, then we may well conclude that all counseling is to some extent cross-cultural.¹⁹

In clinical situations any counselor who is not cross-culturally sensitive will not be effective in helping his/her clients. This is especially true when we realize and evaluate the history of the development of the

¹⁷ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, p. 20.

¹⁸ Paul Pedersen, "Four Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Skill in Counselor Training," *Personnel and Guidance Journal* 56 (1978): 480-484.

¹⁹ Ibid.

modern counseling profession. Derald Sue points out,

Historically, counseling and therapy have been white middle-class professions implicitly and sometimes explicitly serving to acculturate and inculcate people of diverse backgrounds into a relatively narrow picture of mental health.... Even the most hallowed concept of counseling--facilitating individual development--may be considered culturally biased when related to other cultural systems such as those of Asians or American Indians that may be more family or group centered.²⁰

In this regard, Hesselgrave gives a critical evaluation of the effectiveness of counseling help provided for the foreign students in the United States. He states that,

Even when we have set up structures and set aside personnel to help foreign students, we have often failed to be of great help in counseling and helping them and their families in respect to the basics of living and learning in the United States.... What we lack is the ability, not so much in terms of resources as in terms of skills.²¹

Counselors who are unwilling or unable to accommodate to the cultural differences between their clients and themselves are described by Pedersen as *encapsulated*--they are likely to encounter greater resistance from their

²⁰ Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), p. vii.

²¹ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, p. 19.

clients.²² Culturally encapsulated counselors assume that a counselor can deal with clients from other cultures without a modification in the style of counseling.²³ Moreover, counselors should be aware that even when dealing with clients who share a similar background the same counseling model may not be equally effective for all clients. Since all counseling is cross-cultural, there is no one counseling technique for all clients nor is any one theory relevant to all clients. Sue strongly criticizes those counselors who work with the culturally different without this awareness and states that they may be engaging in cultural oppression. He discerns,

Because groups and individuals differ from one another, the blind application of techniques to all situations and all populations seems ludicrous.... Counselors need to understand this equal treatment in counseling may be discriminatory treatment!²⁴

Counselors who are aware of different cultural aspects are capable of introducing relevant approaches in counseling are the individuals Sue calls culturally

²² Paul Pedersen, et al., eds., *Counseling Across Cultures* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), p. 17.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different*, p. 107

skilled counselors.²⁵ It is hoped that in all cross-cultural counseling every counselor could be culturally skillful.

Training for Cross-Cultural Counselors. Just within the last decade, the American counseling profession has begun to be aware of the cross-cultural perspectives of therapy. Some amount of relevant research, workshops, and courses have been available. Yet, in several respects these have been weak. Many of the leaders in this field have been professional counselors who have expertise in counseling theory and techniques but who often know little about social psychology or cultural anthropology. As a result, there sometimes is an insensitivity to the attitudes and perspectives of people in other cultures; often there is an enthusiasm about applying counseling techniques with little awareness of the need to first study and understand a culture before attempting to make therapeutic intervention in other people's lives.²⁶ A recent survey of counselor-education programs in the United States revealed that fewer than one percent of the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁶ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross Culturally*, pp. 5-6.

respondents reported any instructional requirements for the study of nonwhite cultures.²⁷ Hesselgrave echoes,

Many Christian workers (missionaries or counselors) with extensive inter-cultural experience will admit that they have often lacked the ability to relate to problems and perplexities occasioned by cultural differences. Yet training in cross-cultural counseling per se is minimal at best and often nonexistent.²⁸

Recognizing that human and cultural diversity are important factors deserving our increased sensitivity and awareness, the task group of the American Psychological Association (APA) submits the following recommendation:

That the provision of professional services to persons of culturally diverse backgrounds not competent in understanding and providing professional services to such groups should be considered unethical. It should be equally unethical to deny such persons professional services because the present staff is inadequately prepared. It should therefore be the obligation of all service agencies to employ competent persons or to provide continuing education for the present staff to meet the service needs of the culturally diverse population it serves.²⁹

Likewise the American Psychological Association Council of Representatives passed the following resolution at its January 1979 meeting:

²⁷ Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different*, p. 4.

²⁸ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, p. 20.

²⁹ Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different*, p. vii.

It is the sense of the APA Council that APA accreditation reflects our concern that all psychology departments and schools should assure that their students receive preparation to function in a multi-cultural, multi-racial society....³⁰

Various American authors, such as Elaine Copeland, Gary Henderson, and Derald Sue have suggested that cross-cultural training programs for counselors should have at least three components:

1. Consciousness raising,
2. Cognitive understanding, and
3. An effective skills training.³¹

It is noticeable, however, that the training components of consciousness raising and cognitive understanding may have been increasingly stressed, but the component of effective skills training has not been adequately provided. Howard Clinebell stresses that cross-cultural sensitivities and skills in counseling will be increasingly essential in the years ahead.³² The needs and importance of cross-cultural

³⁰ Paul Pedersen and Anthony Marsella, *Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy* (New York: Pergamon, 1983), p. 313.

³¹ Elaine J. Copeland, "Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy," *Personnel and Counseling Journal* 61 (September 1983): 10-19; G. Henderson, ed., *Understanding and Counseling Ethnic Minorities* (Springfield, IL: Thoman, 1979); and Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different*.

³² Clinebell, "Revisioning the Future," p. 115.

counseling may initiate the beginning of a new subject area, or even a new discipline in the field of psychology.

Outlook of Cross-Cultural Counseling in Taiwan

A Shared Worldview: Criterion for Effectiveness.

A person's worldview reveals various components of his/her culture. Sue broadly defines a worldview as follows:

A worldview is how a person perceives his/her relationship to the world (nature, institutions, other people, things, etc.). Worldviews are highly correlated with a person's cultural upbringing and life experiences.... Not only are worldviews composed of our attitudes, values, opinions concepts, but also they may affect how we think, make decisions, behave, and define events.³³

In cross-cultural counseling there is a great possibility that different worldviews are held between the counselor and the counselee. Yet many cross-cultural counselors are so culturally blind that they respond according to their own conditioned values, assumptions, and perspectives of reality without regard for other views.³⁴ These culturally blind counselors are likely to impose negative traits on clients when they judge their clients'

³³ Derald Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Different*, p. 73.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 73-74.

normality/abnormality and health/sickness. It is clear that a shared worldview between the therapist and client will enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural counseling. As has been discussed the operation within a shared worldview is a very significant factor for the effectiveness of *dang-ki* healing. Hesselgrave, too, has made a shared worldview the criterion of effective cross-cultural counseling. He says, "The necessity of developing a culture sensitive approach can be subsumed under the phrase: a shared worldview."³⁵

It should be noted, however, we need not espouse a worldview as our own in order to communicate and even to empathize with clients with other worldviews. In other words, to share a worldview does not imply that the counselor has to adopt the client's or vice versa. The importance of a shared worldview in cross-cultural counseling does not mean counselors have to live the client's worldview as their own. Rather, it means that the counselor is able to understand, accept, and appreciate the client's alternative view of his/her existence in the world. We need to have an understanding of the client's worldview which goes beyond an academic knowledge.³⁶ The ability to

³⁵ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, p. 327.

³⁶ Ibid.

share worldviews in this sense is essential to effective cross-cultural counseling. As it is warned, "To counsel adherents of animistic or folk religions without taking into consideration their struggle with evil spirits is lamentable...." To counsel Hindus without reference to karma is inexcusable. To counsel Buddhists without an understanding of the teaching about no self is incongruous. To counsel Muslims without taking into account the frailty of humanity in the face of Allah's sovereignty is unthinkable.³⁷

The important issue of understanding the Taiwanese client's worldview (folk beliefs) in counseling has not been discussed or stressed by the Taiwanese counseling professionals who very often practice in a cross-cultural situation. Today, the modern counselors (especially the Christian counselors) in Taiwan are urged to be ready to deal with questions and problems initiated by beliefs in local gods and spirits or the religious teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Even when the Taiwanese clients are not educated in these teachings, they usually live by the worldview of these religions. The Western

³⁷ Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross-Culturally*, pp. 176-77.

trained Taiwanese counselors are urged to reconnect with their own cultural roots and to relearn the worldview of the local people.

A Challenging Task: Indigenous Techniques and Theories. The theories and techniques of counseling or psychotherapy are strongly influenced by cultural realities. What is effective in counseling in one culture may not necessarily be so in another culture. In the last two decades, various types of counseling and psychotherapy have been exported from the West to non-Western cultures. It should be noted that many of the Western models of counseling are not instantly exportable in unmodified forms to non-Western cultures. Julian Wohl cautions us that,

Anthropologists and intercultural psychiatric and psychologic students inform us that, in all societies which have been observed, procedures and practices are found that are the functional equivalents of our (Western) therapies. We have, however, no prior grounds for the belief that our forms are workable in those other societies.³⁰

³⁰ Julian Wohl, "Intercultural Psychotherapy: Issues, Questions, and Reflections," in *Counseling Across Cultures*, eds. Paul Pedersen, et al. (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981), p. 186.

Arnold Goldstein comments that,

It is no longer valid to speak in global terms and ask such questions as: Is counseling method A better than counseling method B? Rather, methods and techniques must be related to outcomes which, in turn, are related to specific cultures, therapists, and clients.³⁹

After spending a year as clinical director of the church sponsored counseling center in Singapore, Charles Raher indicates that,

The "Rogers-with-a-dash-of-Freud" approach simply did not work because of too little experience in "caring" in that society, insufficient motivation on the part of counselees, and the influence of the authoritarian orientation of Asian societies.⁴⁰

A few years later Robert Elliot gave his report from the same experiences as Raher had. He admits that,

... Having served as the visiting clinical director of the Church Counseling Center in Singapore for one year, I learned some intriguing things about the difference between Eastern and Western family styles... Trying to be a helpful counselor there turned out to be a good deal more complex than I had experienced in the past.⁴¹

³⁹ Arnold Goldstein, "Evaluating Expectancy Effects in Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy," in *Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy*, eds. Paul Pedersen and Anthony Marsella (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), p. 87.

⁴⁰ Graeme Griffin, "Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care Overseas," in *The New Shape of Pastoral Theology: Essays in Honor of Seward Hiltner*, ed. William Oglesby (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 56.

⁴¹ Robert Elliot, "Marriage and Family Counseling in Singapore," *Perkins School of Theology Journal* 25 (Spring 1972): 7-15.

The insight gained from the above reports again shows what is effective in one culture may not be so in another culture and theories and techniques need to be modified when counseling proceeds cross-culturally.

In the past the practice of counseling or psychotherapy in Taiwan has been based on theories and techniques developed in the United States and England as if the clients and the culture were the same everywhere. The cultural implication of this study strongly suggests the need for the psychotherapeutic theories and techniques learned in the West to be carefully modified so they can be relevant to the Taiwanese culture. Moreover, those Western trained counseling professionals have to **unlearn** a lot if their therapeutic efforts are to be effective. This unlearning process does not refer to minor nuances of style but to fundamental issues of therapeutic procedure and implicitly to the whole theoretical basis.⁴²

What a mixed blessing! One psychiatrist (from India) admits that it took him five years in India to unlearn what he had learned in five years in the United States.⁴³ The Western trained Taiwanese counselors should

⁴² Lebra, *Culture-Bound Syndromes*, p. ix.

⁴³ Pedersen, *Counseling Across Cultures*, p. 331.

have learned of the impractical and ineffective results of simply transplanting the Western theories and techniques into the Taiwanese society.

In order to point out the importance and dynamics of cross-cultural perspectives of counseling in Taiwan the following diagrams are drawn. Diagram 6 indicates that if a Western trained Taiwanese counselor tries to impose or transplant Western theories and techniques in counseling a Taiwanese client, the clinical outcome will be ineffective (indicated by the dotted line). It is essential for the counselor before counseling with a Taiwanese client to modify or transform theories and techniques from a cross-cultural perspective--an unlearning process (see Diagram 7). In a broader sense, since every counseling situation is cross-cultural, an effective counselor is a person who "knows thyself and knows thy client." Counselors must relearn or reconnect with their own cultural roots so that they can properly identify with or distinguish the cultural (or subcultural) differences between themselves and the clients. Diagram 8 shows a Western trained Taiwanese counselor with a shared worldview is another key to effective cross-cultural counseling in Taiwan--a relearning process. It should be noted that the American counselor when counseling with Americans needs to see through the situation and dynamics with one cross-cultural perspective

(see Diagram 9). However, when the American trained Taiwanese counselor is counseling Taiwanese clients he/she needs to see through with double cross-cultural perspectives (see Diagram 10).

Cl: Client
 Cr: Counselor
 T-T: (Counseling) Theories and Techniques
 C-C: Cross-Cultural (Perspective)
 S-W: Shared Worldview

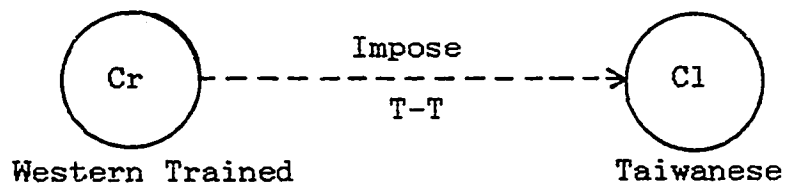


Diagram 6

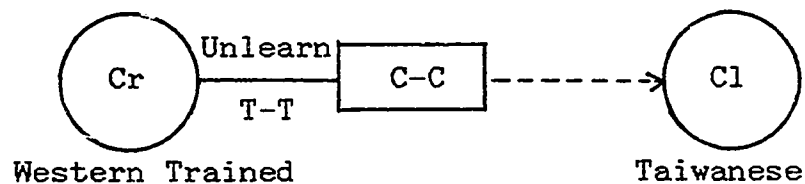


Diagram 7

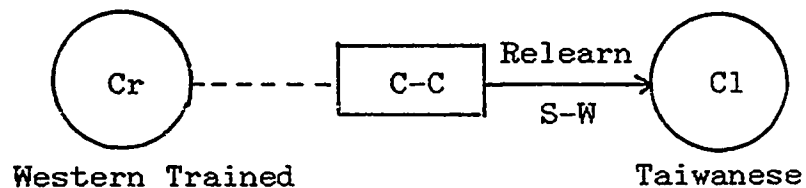


Diagram 8

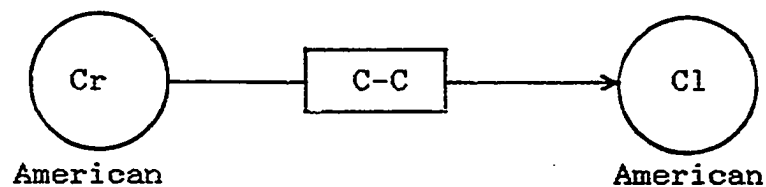


Diagram 9

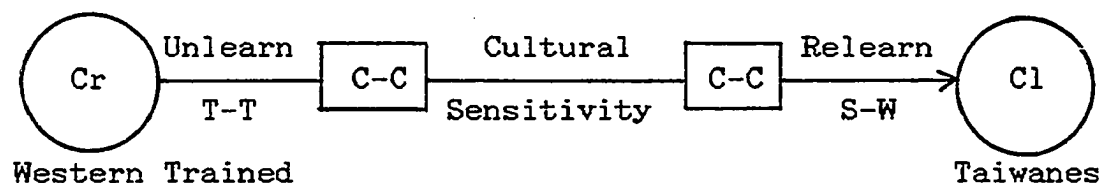


Diagram 10

The history of professional counseling in Taiwan is short and it is too early for it to have developed unique and systematic theories and techniques of its own. Realistically, Taiwanese counseling professionals still need to develop their own systems and approaches by gaining more insight from Western theories and techniques. This does not necessitate identifying with the Western cultural assumptions of what are the best theories and techniques for the Taiwanese culture. The fact that modern counseling has not been as effective as folk counseling in Taiwan implies that modern counselors first need to reexamine their theories and techniques and test whether or not they are relevant to the local culture.

Hopefully, the next step is to develop indigenous theories and techniques in accordance with the appropriate integration of Eastern and Western practices. This will bring to modern counselors a great challenging goal which can only be met through indepth cross-cultural and interdisciplinary studies. In the years to come Taiwanese researchers and clinicians need to work together closely and cooperatively in order to achieve the goal. After I return to Taiwan, I hope to be able to secure a colleague, whose profession is in folk religion or ethnology, and share in presenting courses related to indigenous culture and folk healing for Taiwanese counselors. The training program for pastoral counselors should be enhanced by additional courses with a cross-cultural emphasis in the curriculum of theological seminaries. The trainees will be encouraged and required to make their best efforts in field studies and cross-cultural research of various folk healing systems in Taiwan.

CONCLUSIOIN

Dang-ki healing is only one of many traditional and often utilized methods of folk healing in Taiwan. Much more research remains to be done with regard to the effectiveness of other methods and their relationship with modern healing systems in Taiwan. The personality traits of the *dang-kis* and the impact of their role in the family life would be another interesting topic for inquiry. Since there are considerable cross-cultural issues discussed in this study, it remains a broad area for further studies. If possible the future cross-cultural studies should best include interdisciplinary approaches and joint efforts among professionals from various fields.

This thesis explores and analyzes one of the popular healing traditions in Taiwan in the context of psychotherapy. Based upon the materials presented in this study, I draw the conclusion that in most cases *dang-kis* are effective "folk psychotherapists". This may surprise many modern practitioners that *dang-kis* have power and skills to heal successfully. It shows how little modern psychotherapeutic professionals really understand the dynamics and nature of healing. This study provides a new appreciation of the universal components of effective

psychotherapy and that they are present in both modern and indigenous forms of therapy.

This study challenges counselors in any society (especially a more pluralistic one) to look carefully from a cross-cultural perspective at the clinical realities in their own culture and subcultures. Needless to say the tasks of improving the image and increasing the effectiveness of psychotherapy are urgent ones, which lie before the Taiwanese pastoral counselors. Only by incorporating indigenous perspectives can pastoral counseling effectively deal with both clients and their problems. From either a scientific or a religious view-point, there may be no interrelation between pastoral counseling and *dang-ki* healing in Taiwan. This is why the general attitude toward each other has been one of ignorance and suspicion. However, this study suggests that it is time for pastoral counselors to start seriously investigating the possibilities and prospects for creative cooperation and/or coexistence with *dang-kis* and other folk healers. They may learn to work with one another in order to complement their clinical effectiveness. This indeed raises a big challenge for pastoral counselors and demands further studies and objective evaluations. When these insights are more clearly obtained and the positive outcomes evaluated, the next task will be to indigenize applicable approaches in

pastoral counseling. The Taiwanese pastoral counselors should and can respond to the challenges which *dang-ki* healing has revealed to them.

The counseling profession in Taiwan is too young to have developed its own indigenous theories and techniques. It will take many years and constant joint efforts of Taiwanese professionals from various fields in order to achieve this challenging goal of indigenization. However, this study has pointed out some directions in which future indigenous models of pastoral counseling may be moving and focusing. They are summarized as follows:

(1) The Taiwanese pastoral counselor should be aware that flexibility and integration are the two key words in developing an indigenous model. This means that pastoral counselors must feel free to utilize different therapeutic systems to meet each client's special needs and to direct the counseling approach both "Taiwanese" and "pastoral."

(2) A major difference in psychotherapeutic approaches between East and West is in their emphasis on family and individual respectively. Apparently, a family systems perspective is very appropriate as a clinical focus in the Taiwanese culture. Furthermore, since filial piety is the root of Taiwanese ethics in counseling filial related issues raised by the client should be keenly dealt

with. In this respect, a restoration of the lost harmony between the client and his/her family should be one of primary goals of counseling.

(3) Taiwanese clients look for more than simply "talk therapy" and expect to be given concrete advice in counseling. They tend to somaticize their depressive reactions and physical complaints is a more acceptable way of expressing psychological and interpersonal difficulties. Thus, holistic orientation of counseling approach should be emphasized both in diagnosis and treatment in order to restore the client's harmonious or balanced wellness. In practice, the counselor may appropriately exercise his/ her authority and direct the counseling session in a more structuralized manner. The action-oriented or right-brain approach of Christian resources, acupressure, biofeedback, role play, and psychodrama... may be introduced while recognizing the significance of intrapsychic exploration (left-brain approach).

(4) Taiwanese pastors are respected, trusted, and acquainted with local residents (Christians and non-Christians) Most Taiwanese pastors have a close and intimate relationship with their parishioners. They are heartily accepted as extended family members. This gives a special advantage for Taiwanese pastoral counselors to provide counseling service in a client's home which

sometimes is a better setting than in a counseling room. When Taiwanese pastors are well trained they may be the best available modern professionals to provide counseling service in the local community. I hope that someday every Taiwanese church can be a community counseling center.

Finally, at the end of this study, I would like to make a few personal reflections. From the beginning this study has been a personal journey through the world of *dang-ki* healing in which I have researched, observed, and gained insights. My journey into the *dang-ki*'s world at first was very shocking. Yet once I could reconnect myself to my own cultural roots my encounters with *dang-ki* healing appeared to be very exciting and enlightening. This journey has helped me to understand better my own culture and its people (and therefore my clients). It makes me more aware of the health care systems, traditional and modern, East and West, religious and secular, that provide psychotherapy and healing. It also helps me in strengthening and deepening my understanding of the role and function of pastoral counselors. Indeed, this study has stimulated and facilitated my further growth both personally and professionally.

As I end the writing of this thesis, I have a strong drive to devote myself to the challenging tasks of developing a clinical system which is both professionally

effective and culturally applicable in counseling with Taiwanese clients. I am very happy to complete a further step in meeting this challenge by conducting this study.

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APPENDIX (SLIDES)